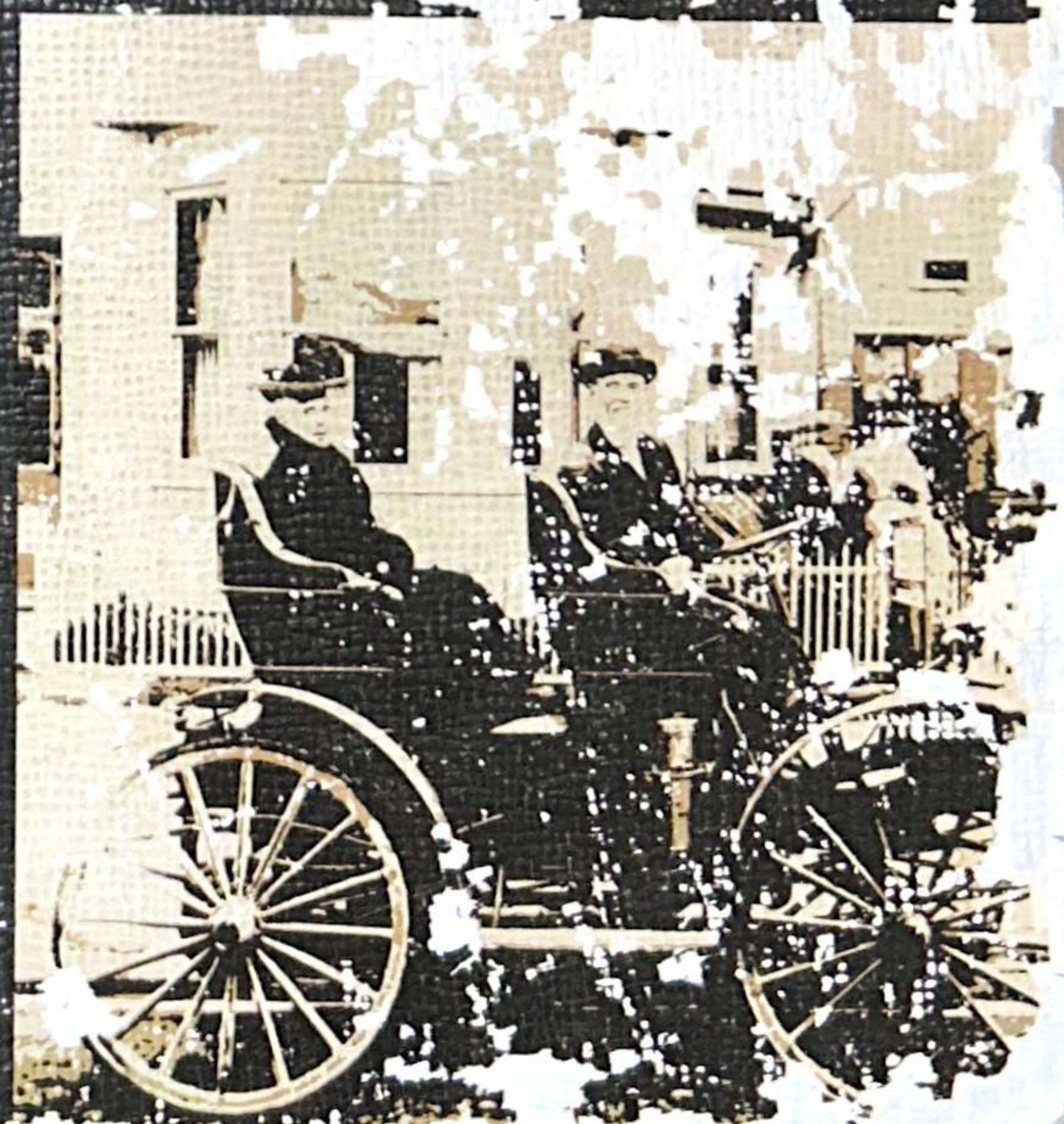
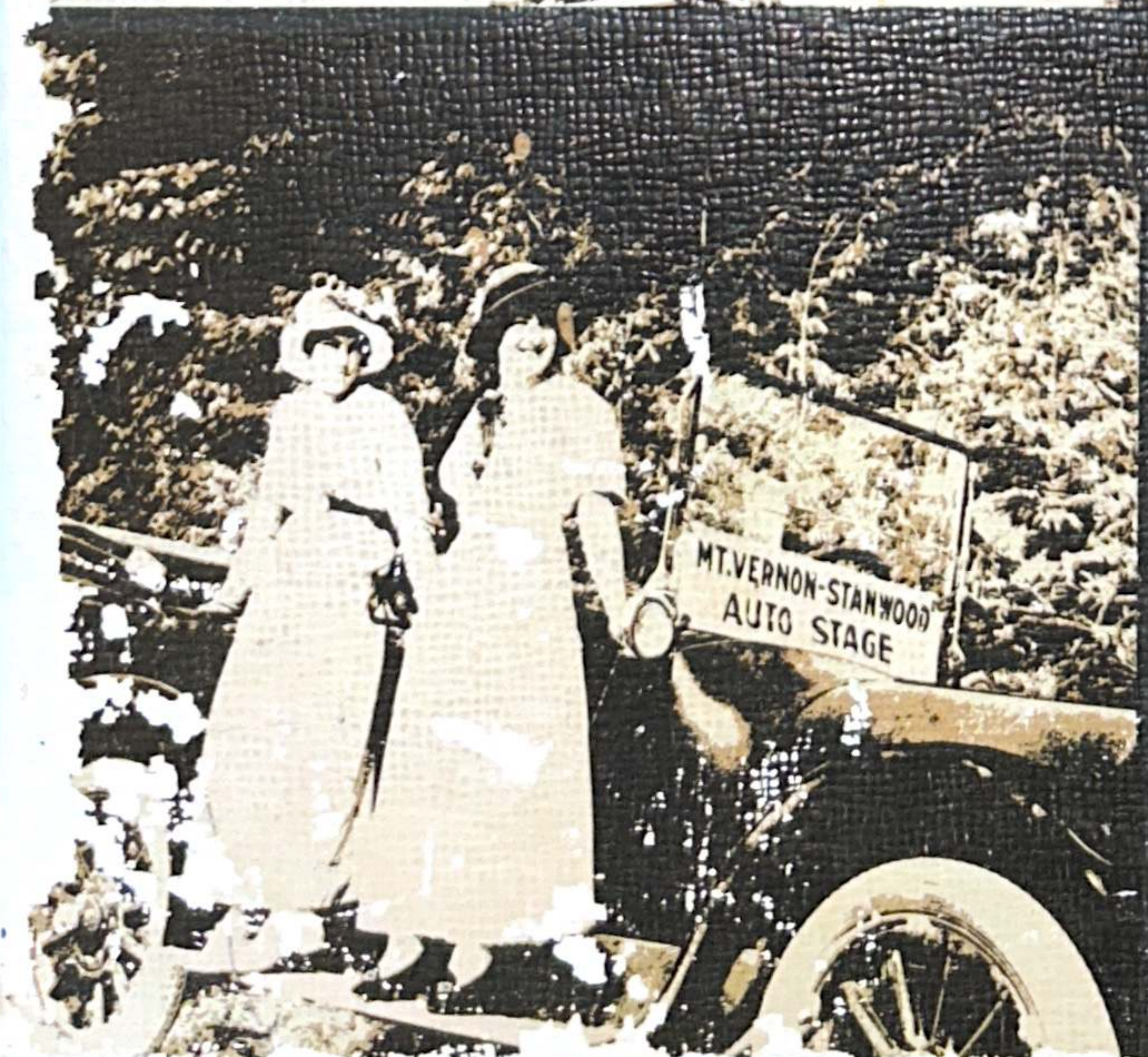
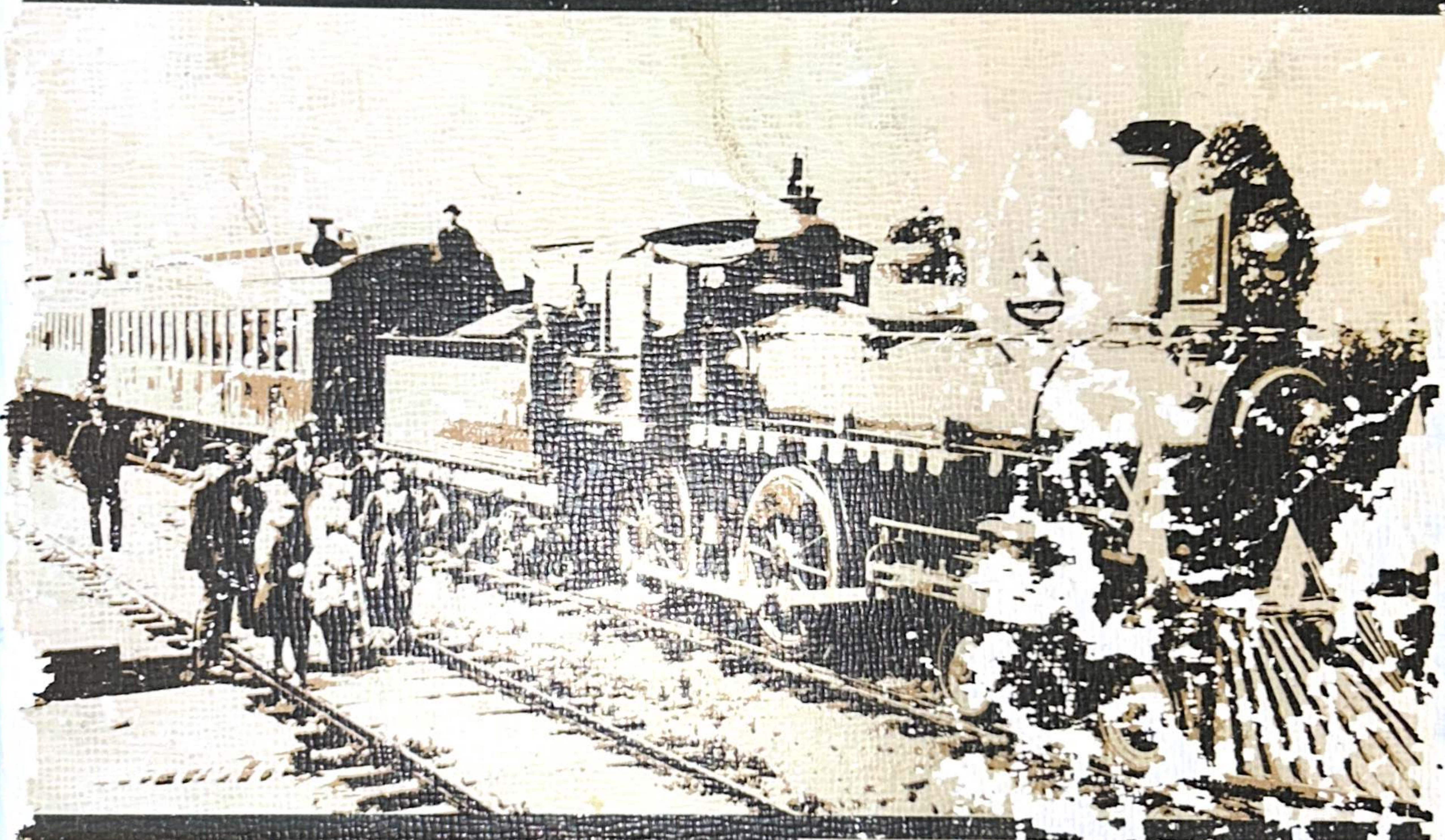


# Skagit Settlers

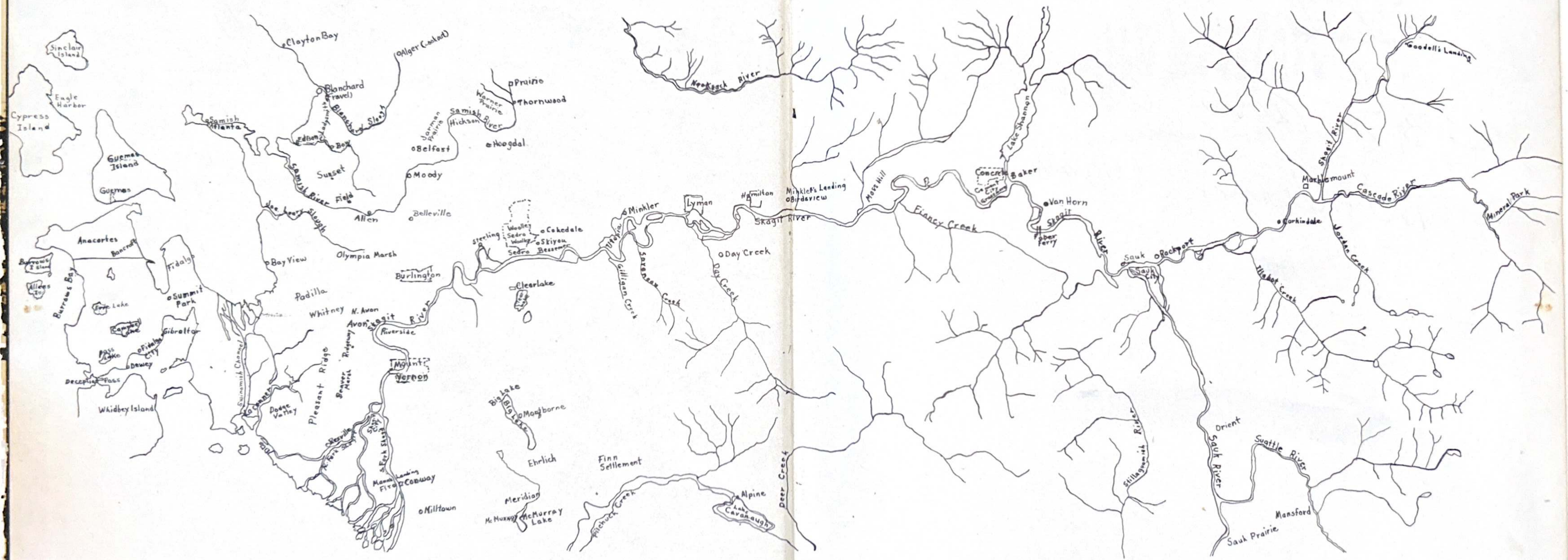
Trials and Triumphs, 1890-1920





# WHERE IT WAS IN SKAGIT COUNTY

Place Names, 1890 and after





# Skagit Settlers

Trials and Triumphs, 1890-1920







# Skagit Settlers

Trials and Triumphs, 1890-1920

Skagit County Historical Series No. 4

A Committee of the Skagit County Historical Society

Margaret Willis, *Editor*

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Skagit County Historical Society

P.O. Box 424

Mount Vernon, Washington 98273



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### FRONTISPIECE

Threshing at Jim Dunlap's place about 1900. The picture shows the whole process, the wagon in the foreground loading bundles of oats, the steam engine immediately behind it which furnished the power through the long belt which connects it with the thresher in the background. On the left a wagon is unloading; on the right an empty wagon is just pulling away and a full one is about to drive up. The sack sewers show as a little cluster of people beyond the empty wagon.

Picture from P. H. Dunlap

COVER DESIGN BY GRANDISON RUSSELL

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*Mr + Mrs Claude Verrall*



*People (ask time I know)*

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# Preface

## TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS

### 1890 - 1920

This volume has been more difficult to research and write than *CHECHACOS ALL* for a number of reasons. The mass of pictures and available data from which to select is much greater for the 1890 to 1920 period than for earlier times; the significant actors in the drama are much more numerous; the living men and women who have memories of at least part of the period are legion.

Thus there are more persons to supply information, more disputed facts and interpretations, and more knowledgeable people to spot errors. There is also an understandable desire on the part of families whose members or ancestors played an important part in the development of the county to see that part adequately recognized. In the same way communities, conscious of their separate histories, wish to see their stories preserved in print.

Decisions about what to include have been difficult. A "right" balance of all these factors is impossible to achieve. As the editor has threaded her way among these legitimate interests and claims she has probably done full justice to none, but she hopes that there is at least partial justice to most.

The full and free cooperation that the Book Committee has received from multitudes of people has been invaluable. We hope individuals will not feel disappointed if they find that their contributions have furnished the background which ties the whole story together rather than being included in full. One member of the committee tape-recorded interviews with practically all the residents of Cedardale. Such an embarrassment of riches is a pleasant but also a vexing problem. We have always hoped that the brevity, necessary to keep an overview of the county within the compass of a single volume, would encourage concerned citizens in local areas to publish fuller accounts of the history of their locality, complete with names and some biographical material.

The membership of the committee which prepared this book includes individuals who come from all sections of the county and who also have a wide variety of skills and interests which have contributed to the project. Besides those whose names appear as committee members there were

others who worked with us for a time but had to withdraw for personal reasons. Among them was Alice Connolly who did a large amount of research in the files of the Mount Vernon Argus during the summer of 1974, research which proved very valuable during the preparation of the manuscript.

Much of the writing was done by the editor, weaving together the information gathered by committee members from a bewildering number of sources. Manuscripts by committee members have often been used verbatim without specific attribution, though an attempt has been made to show the source of quotations from outside the committee. The only complete segment by one person is Chapter II, "Steam, Rails, and Logs." That is the work of Dennis B. Thompson whose hobby is the study of logging railroads; his research in this area is indefatigable, his picture collection is enormous, and his knowledge is encyclopedic. The editor felt it would be presumptuous to rewrite his account.

Getting this book into print in 1975 would have been impossible without the generous help of committee members and others, notably Helen Dwelley and Jean Allen, in many time-consuming tasks — finding people who could identify individuals in pictures, checking manuscript chapters for accuracy and balance, reading proof, working on indexes and text, addressing and stuffing envelopes for prepublication publicity, making the dummy which showed the printer the layout of pictures and text, preparing orders for mailing, and helping in a dozen other ways. They have suffered cheerfully through laborious hours, claiming it was worth while to learn through personal experience how much work goes into the publication of a book.

We have tried our best to avoid errors but are sure there must be many, especially in picture identifications made after the lapse of two generations. The editor is eternally grateful for all the timely corrections which have reduced their number, but assumes full responsibility for those which remain. Please, dear readers, call them to our attention so that, if there is a second printing, that version may be better than the first.

MARGARET WILLIS, *Editor*.



# Foreword

## TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS

### 1890 - 1920

It is trite to remark that change is continuous. Everyone is aware of it, but just what happened when and why it occurred tends to become blurred with time. It helps to look back occasionally and try to sort things out.

This version of Skagit County history between 1890 and 1920 is one which, to a group of local citizens, seems true from the vantage point of 1975. Briefly it is the story of how the coming of the railroads, the rapid cutting of the easily accessible forests, the improvement of the roads, and the triumph of steam and gasoline over the horse altered conditions in the county, and how living patterns evolved in the same period. Basic changes came most rapidly during the 30-year span with which the book deals, though, as in *CHECHACOS ALL*, it is impossible to confine facts strictly within the strait-jacket of dates.

For the information contained in the following pages many different sources were used. The memories and pooled information of the committee members set the general outlines. Newspaper files and other published sources such as the 1906 *HISTORY OF SKAGIT AND SNOHOMISH COUNTIES* proved very useful. Ray Jordan's *YARNS OF THE SKAGIT COUNTRY* appeared just in time to be helpful. A vast amount of information, not all of which could be used, came from the memories, pictures, and files of documents and printed materials made available by committee members and numerous present and former county residents who were interviewed, either face to face or by mail. To those whose pictures we used we owe a special vote of thanks. (See list of picture contributors.)

To the following persons we are indebted for much of the value which this venture may have as a record of Skagit County history:

Carl Anderson, Elin Anderson, Howard Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Anderson, Mrs. Stanley Anderson, Wallace Anderson, Fred Bandazy, Frank Barker, Art Barringer, Iola Barratt Bazinet, William J. Beale, Sr., Mrs. Denny Beeman, Leone Currie Benthien, Myra Benton, Leanna Gaches Bergquist, Clarence Bays, Betty Cornelius Bowen, Pete Brandt, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bratz, Mrs. Donald Brunner, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Buckner,

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We are very grateful for the help given by those named above. Even such an imposing list, however, cannot include all the people consulted by 33 committee members during two years of work. To all those not named who gave their time to supply information, authenticate data, and help in a variety of ways, we extend our sincerest thanks.

#### THE COMMITTEE FOR SKAGIT SETTLERS

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Glee Davis	Helen McInnes Millward	(Mrs. Gov)	Doris Tursi (Mrs. John)
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Hoffman (Mrs. Chester)	Albert Ovenell	(Mrs. Wallace)	Andrea Millward Xaver



## Chapter I

### THE NEW ERA

Obviously a new era was beginning in 1890. Washington had become a state the year before. The "chechacos," the newcomers who had pioneered the Skagit county, were becoming the old timers. The railroads had reached the area, bringing new opportunities and new problems. Some restless early settlers were moving on to virgin territory but the majority had settled into the tasks of proving up on homesteads, clearing more of their farm land, turning the forests into lumber or shingles, developing the fisheries and the mines, and seizing the opportunities which growth offered to men of courage and imagination.

Fresh streams of newcomers kept arriving during all the years with which this book deals, attracted by Jim Hill's Great Northern advertising, by the glowing letters from already established relatives and friends, by the county's own advertising through publications and its booth at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909, and by a variety of other incentives. The increase in the county's population in successive census years tells the story in a nutshell. 1890 — 8,730; 1900 — 14,272; 1910 — 29,241; 1920 — 33,388. This book relates some of the changes which came with such rapid growth.

Up to 1890 almost all transportation had been by water. The early day canoes, sailing craft, and steamers had served to establish practically every town either on salt water or on river banks. The small breed of sternwheelers, "the mosquito fleet" reputed to be able to "float on a heavy dew," swarmed up the sloughs to pick up crops at the farmer's granaries. As settlements grew so did the size and number of the sternwheelers which plied the river and the sidewheelers and other steamers which connected all the river towns and salt water ports with Seattle, just beginning to be an important town, and with Bellingham and Port Townsend, both of them older and for a time more populous than Seattle. Travelers unable to reach

Samish, Anacortes, or LaConner to catch a steamer on a scheduled run could row or paddle out to the usual course of such ships and wait until one came along. On signal the passenger would be taken aboard — boat and all if necessary.

For people living along the river, the sloughs, or on the islands, common transportation was by small boat or canoe. This was the way they went to town, visited neighbors on the other side, or made the trip to salt water to save steamboat fare. Indians with large canoes could be hired for moving heavy freight or harvest crops on short trips across the river or on longer ones up and down the stream.

For those who lived inland — and their numbers increased steadily — it was another story. They needed roads and bridges, a way to reach the towns and move their crops to market. In its natural state the delta of the Skagit from Sedro Woolley to salt water was filled with streams and creeks, sloughs and swamps that had to be crossed or avoided in land travel. Phenomenal loads were carried on men's backs over the trails before the paths were widened to make them into rough roads along which a skid or wagon could travel. Swampy places were surfaced with cedar puncheons to keep oxen, horses, and vehicles from sinking into the mud. Over such roads, pitching over tree roots and into pot holes, wagons made their slow way, settlers moved with their goods and cattle, and buckboard stages pulled by weary horses carried travelers from town to town.

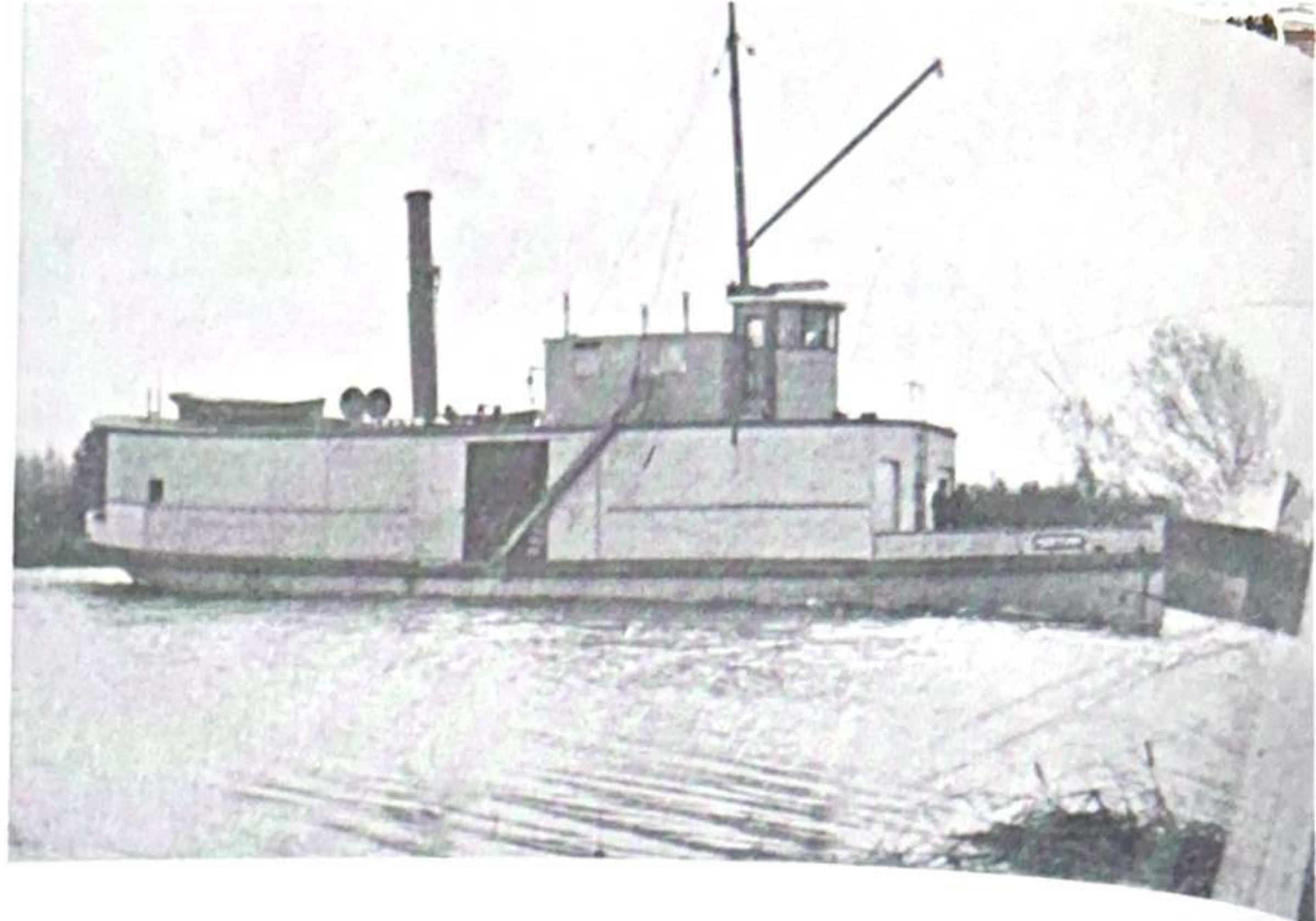
The first concern of the county commissioners when Skagit separated from Whatcom in 1883 had been the building of roads and bridges, not paved roads and steel bridges, but grubbed out tracks with bridges made by felling trees across a small stream or slough, adzing out a flat surface on the upper side, and nailing down a deck of heavy planks. When the railroads came, attention was temporarily diverted from road building. As the





Crossing the Skagit near Marblemount in a dugout canoe from the Barratt place to the O'Briens to help with the birth of a baby. Around 1920. In canoe Maggie Barratt, Miss Smith, Iola Bazinet, and Ed O'Brien.

*Picture from Iola Bazinet*



Steamer Neptune on a slough about 1900. Since the sloughs were too narrow for turning these little steamers of the mosquito fleet had to back out the channel to deep water after loading at the granaries.

*Picture from P. H. Dunlap*

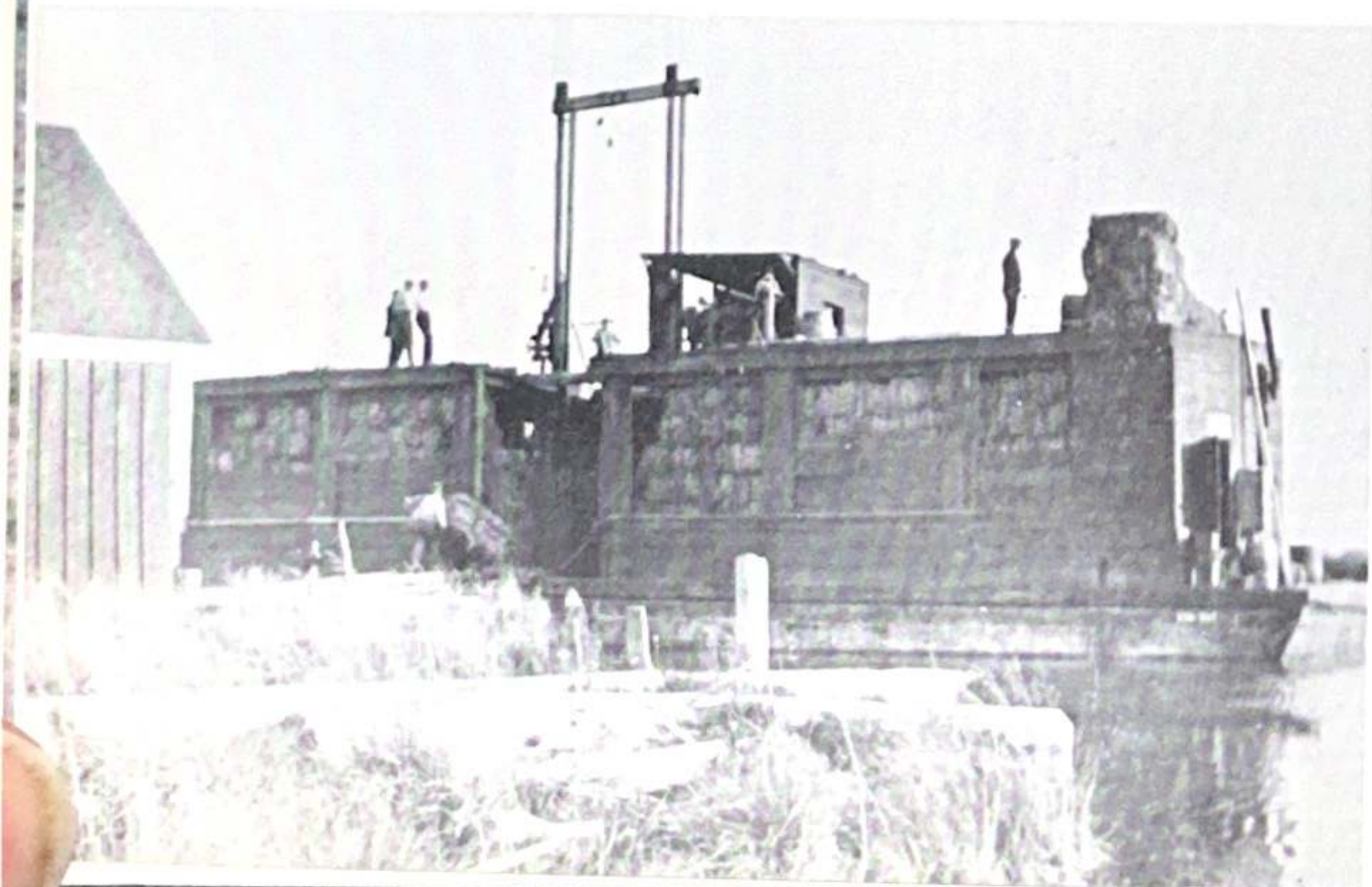
Skagit News wrote in 1893, "Natural conditions are such as to render the building of good roads through the marshes and across the tide flats extremely difficult and expensive."

Railroads were greeted with unrestrained enthusiasm. For Sedro the first train was a Christmas present in 1889. Anacortes opened the new era on November 25, 1890, when an excursion train, carrying notables from as far away as Portland, pulled into the new Ocean Dock on Guemes Channel. They were entertained with a great banquet, celebrating the meeting of ocean and rail transportation on the short route to the Orient. On August 12, 1891, the rails of the line later to be the Great Northern were laid across Kincaid Street in Mount Vernon to the raucous welcome of church bells ringing, fire alarm at full blast, and 30 steam whistles adding to the din. The whole town of Hamilton turned out later that same year to welcome the first train from Anacortes.

In the railway building period of the 1890s two north-south lines were completed through the county connecting it with Seattle and Vancouver,

Loading baled hay on a scow from a granary on the bank of a slough at a tidewater farm. Exact date and place are uncertain, but probably after 1900.

*Picture from Mabel Reedy*

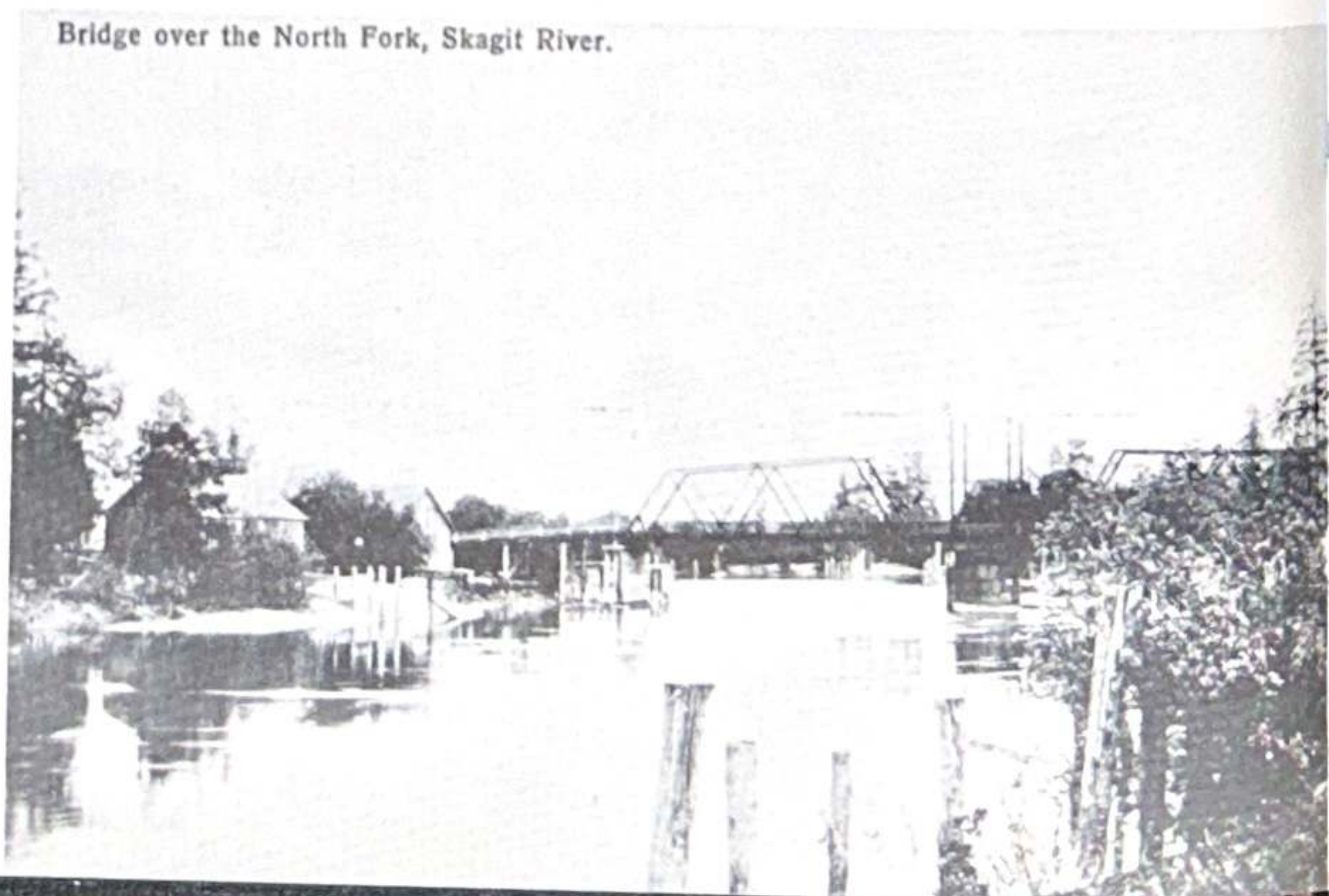


one route along the chain of lakes (Lake McMurray, Big Lake, and Clear Lake) and through Sedro Woolley, and the other closer to the coast via Mount Vernon and Burlington. The east-west line which started at Anacortes and reached Hamilton in 1891 was extended to Concrete and Rockport in 1901 but was never built through the mountains to Spokane as projected. The Fairhaven and Southern, which had been the first line into Sedro from Fairhaven did not build south of the Skagit. Feeder lines from Mount Vernon to LaConner and Bay View were promoted but not enough stock was sold to permit construction. The nation-wide depression of 1893 effectively ended the projects. The electric street car line which was built from Anacortes to Dewey in 1891 made only one trip, enough to collect its land grant, before suspending service. The logging railroads, described in the next chapter, became the feeder lines for the main lines and the mills but did not serve the farmers.

Attention turned again to road building. Farm to market roads were essential if farmers were to

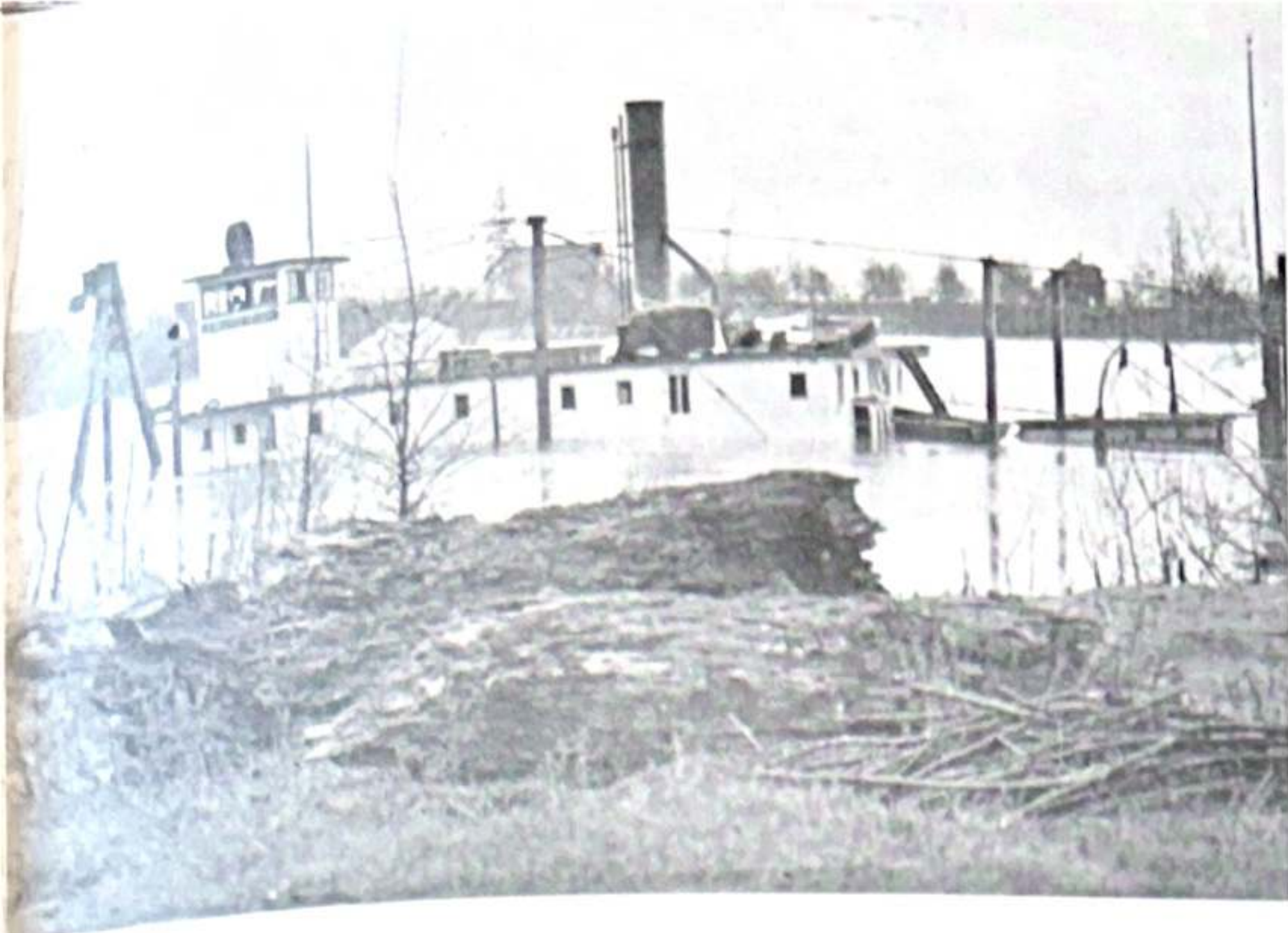
First bridge over North Fork of the Skagit River built in 1912. The buildings at the left of the pictures are granaries which were later washed out by high water.

*Picture from Lou Carlson*



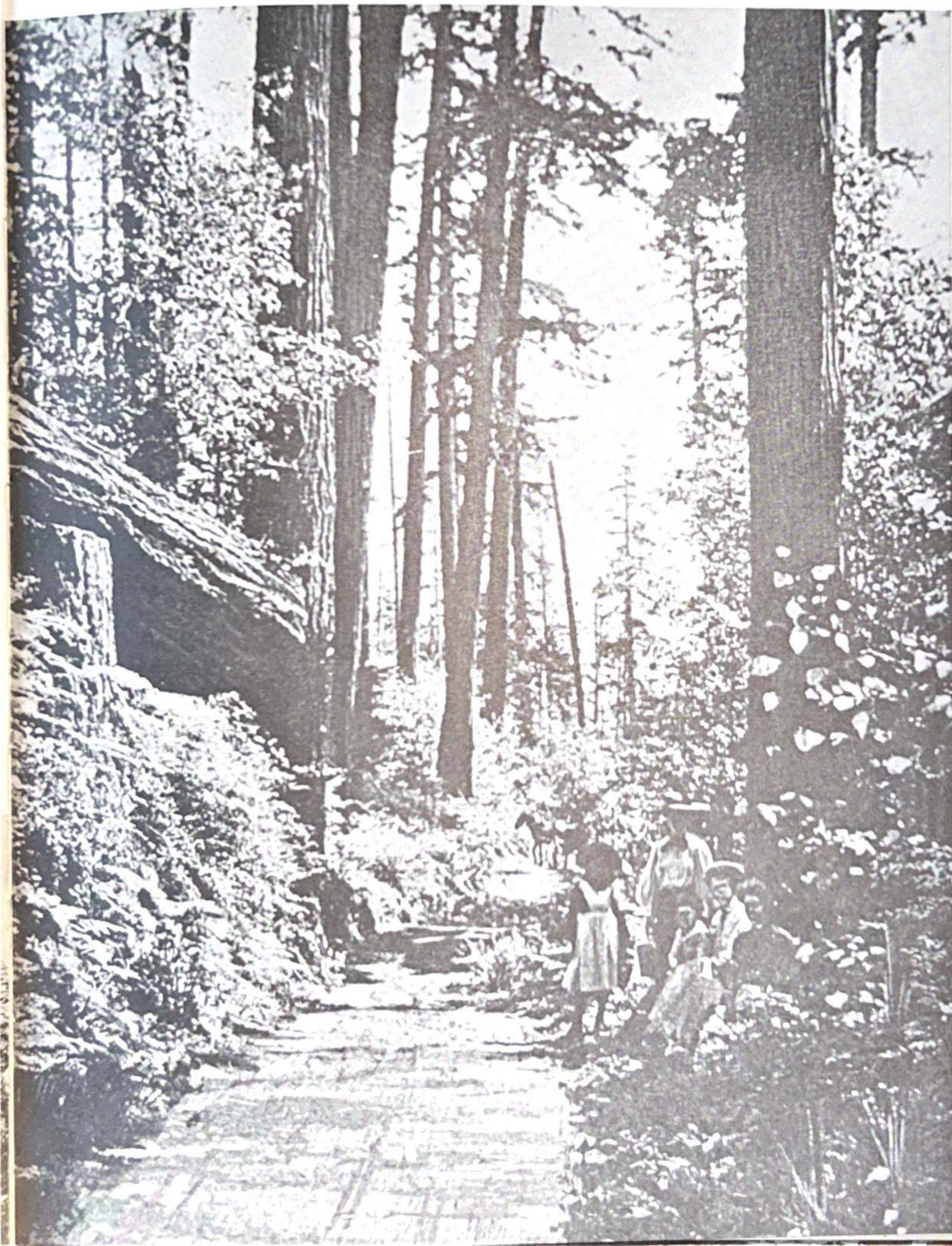
Bridge over the North Fork, Skagit River.





About Jan. 1, 1918, the snag boat, Swinomish, struck the Great Northern bridge at Riverside and was so much damaged that she sank. The engineer ran her against the bank while she was sinking.

*Picture from John Ball*



Heart Lake Road near Anacortes in the early years of the century. The width of this road is typical of the thoroughfares of the times but the surface is better than most well traveled routes.

*Picture from  
Mrs. Stanley Anderson*





Looking across at March's Point from the hill above Weaverling Spit. At the left is the wagon bridge on piles and to the right is the trestle of the Great Northern

Railway. The buildings at the end of the wagon bridge are those of Munk's Landing or Fidalgo.

From the collection of Wallie Funk

*This was the gravel H/way across to for Arden*  
reach the towns along the railroads and gravel was absolutely necessary if roads were to be passable during the rainy season. Thousands of wagon loads were hauled from the gravel pits by plodding horses to be dumped in piles in the middle of the country roads. Sometimes the ridge of stones was crudely spread with a wooden drag but often it was distributed over the surface only by the feet of horses and the wheels of wagons. As money was scarce in the county treasury and in the farmers' pockets the residents along a road were often allowed to work out their taxes in hauling gravel and grading. A graveled road which had a drainage ditch along the right of way was passable in all weather, but drainage was another problem which took years to work out.

The demand for roads was so great that it was a long time before the county could get around to building into the more remote areas. Settlers often had to grub and grade their own roads, as was done by the people of Walker Valley, by the Finn Settlement east of McMurray, and by the Swedish community of Hoogdal. Such roads until they were graveled by the county were passable in dry weather with sufficient horse power, but were best avoided after a rain.

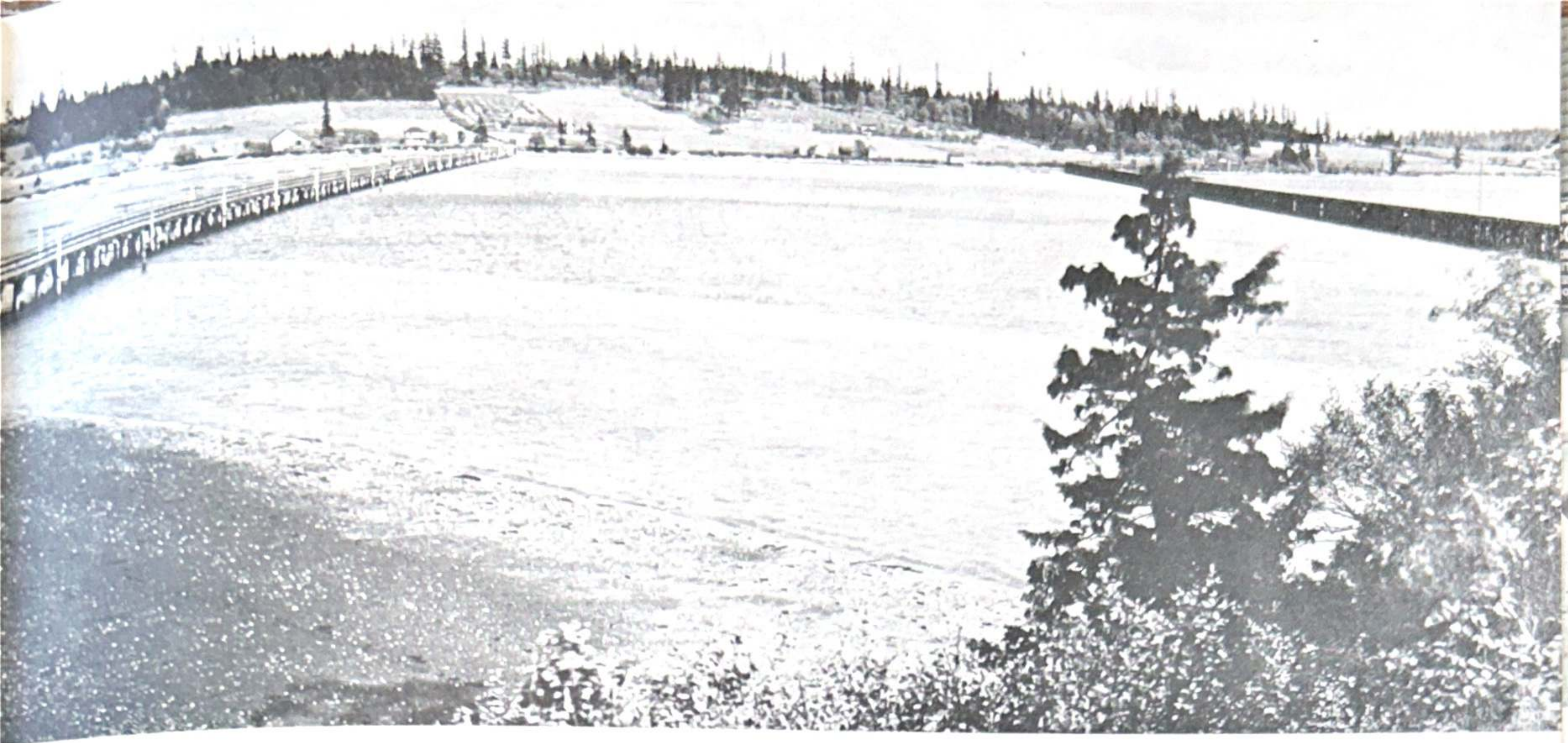
Ways of crossing streams were critical for land travel. The Skagit and most of its tributaries were too wide to be bridged by a felled tree. Ferries were begun as individual enterprises at strategic spots, charging tolls for the service. The earliest were

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*  
canoes, but it was very inconvenient, though possible, to take a wagon apart to load in the canoe and to swim the horses behind it. Morgan Davies constructed a horse and wagon ferry at Marblemount by placing two canoes parallel and plank-ing over between them. At most other locations simple double-ended scows were used. A large cable was strung from trees on opposite sides of the river; a system of cables hooked the ferry to a large pulley that ran on the high cable. By crank-ing a wheel the angle of the scow could be ad-justed so that the current pushed it across the stream.

The most traveled ferries were taken over by the county in the 1890s and made free during the daylight hours. Ferry tenders usually lived in a shack near their ferry, working on it only when a crossing was requested and using the rest of their time to cultivate a garden or do some other nearby work. The county paid them about \$40 or \$50 a month, approximately the same rate of pay as the school teachers at the time. There were many hair-raising tales of ferry accidents in the swift current of the upper river as cables broke or scows tipped their occupants into the water, accidents that were especially likely to happen at night when the tender was not on duty and people undertook to run the ferry themselves.

Replacing the ferries with bridges took a long time. The first bridge over the Skagit was the one at Mount Vernon, built in 1892-3. It was of





O. N. Lee's men ferrying horses across the Skagit about 1879. This was probably the first cable ferry across the Skagit.

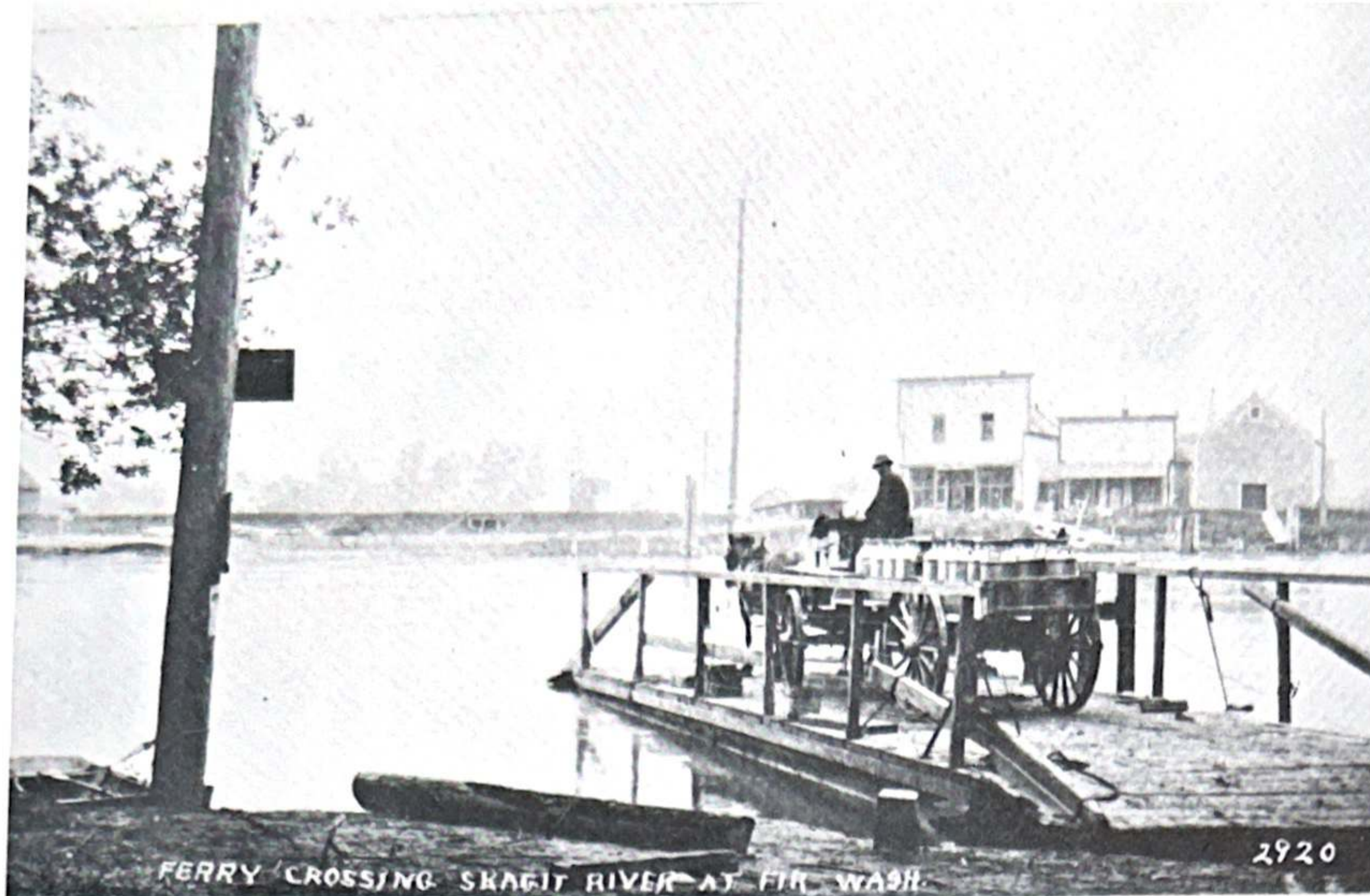
*Picture from the Ole N. Lee family*

Canoe-ferry crossing the Skagit from Marblemount to the Barratt place on the Cascade River. Sadie Siverling is the woman in a white hat with a dark band. Her sister Maggie is in the back with no hat. The man standing is Otis Rogers. Next to him is Iola Barratt Bazinet.

*Picture from Hazel Tracy*





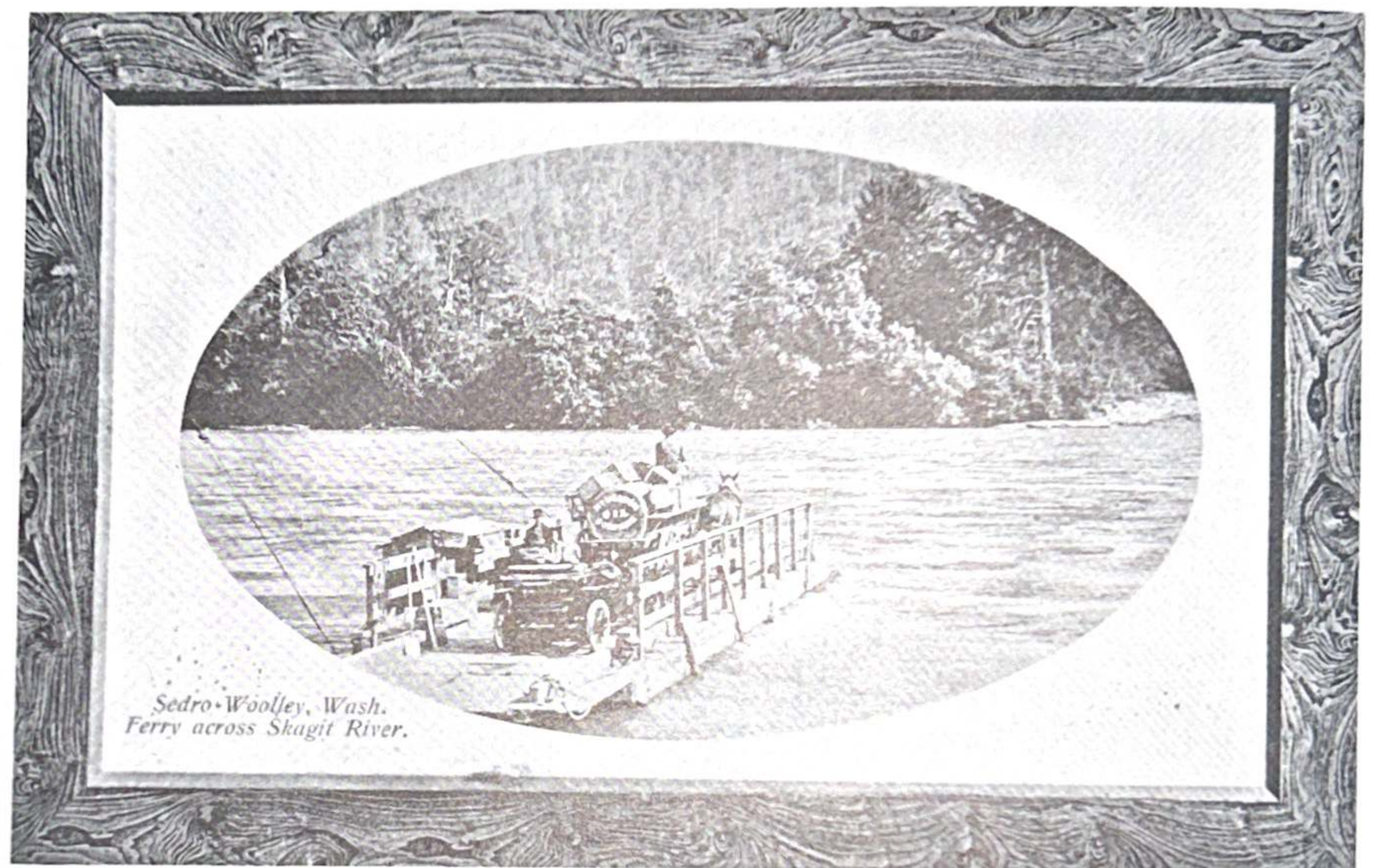


Fir-Conway ferry before the first bridge was built over the South Fork (1914). The milk wagon is on its way to or from the condenser, probably about 1912, or it may be going to the Finstad and Utgard Creamery in Conway.

*From the Owen Tronsdal collection*

Ferry across the Skagit River at Sedro Woolley about 1910. The horse-drawn wagon of the Mount Vernon Oil Company and one automobile make a full load. In the foreground is the apron which, like the one in front which does not show, is raised during the crossing but lowered against the bank to allow the vehicles to leave or enter the ferry. The diagonal lines at the left of the picture are the cables which are hooked to the big pulley which runs on the ferry cable across the river.

*Picture from Skagit County Historical Museum*



Sauk ferry showing the crude but sturdy construction of the scow and the apron.

*Picture from Mary Parks Larsen*





The Deception Pass ferry landing at Dewey. The ferry was established by Fred Finsen in 1913 and was run by him for three or four years. He sold it to Mr. Lang. The ferry operated until the bridge was built over Deception Pass in 1935.

*Picture from Les Finsen*



The Coronet Bay landing. The Deception Pass ferry, started in 1913 by Fred Finsen. The ferry was the only link between Fidalgo Island and Whidbey until the Deception Pass bridge opened in 1935.

*Picture from Les Finsen*



Coronet Bay landing of the Deception Pass ferry.

*Picture from Ed Rodgers*

wooden truss construction, had a draw span that was opened by the bridge tender by hand, and bore a large sign at each end, "\$25 FINE FOR RIDING OR DRIVING OVER THIS BRIDGE FASTER THAN A WALK." The western span went out in the flood of 1906, carried away by the sprawling roots of a tree which swept under it in the swift current. The span was quickly repaired but it was obvious that the entire bridge needed to be raised. It was replaced in 1908, the swing span this time equipped with a gasoline motor for opening and closing it, a great improvement over the hand-pushed key method.

Bridges were built over the Skagit in four places in the 1914 to 1920 period, over the North and South Forks to Fir Island, between Sedro

Woolley and Clear Lake, and between Burlington and Mount Vernon at Riverside. In 1915 the Swinomish Channel was bridged at LaConner; the Channel bridge between Whitney and Anacortes dates from 1892. Ferries were still in use in 1920 at all up-river crossings.

Towns, too, were struggling with the condition of their streets which often were worse than the county roads. Anacortes solved its problem early in its history by planking its streets, using timber cut from the site of the mushrooming "magic city." Logs were taken to Bowman's mill where they were cut into huge planks which were used to surface Commercial Avenue from the dock to the business district. Other towns used planks for crossings in the business section to save pedestrians.

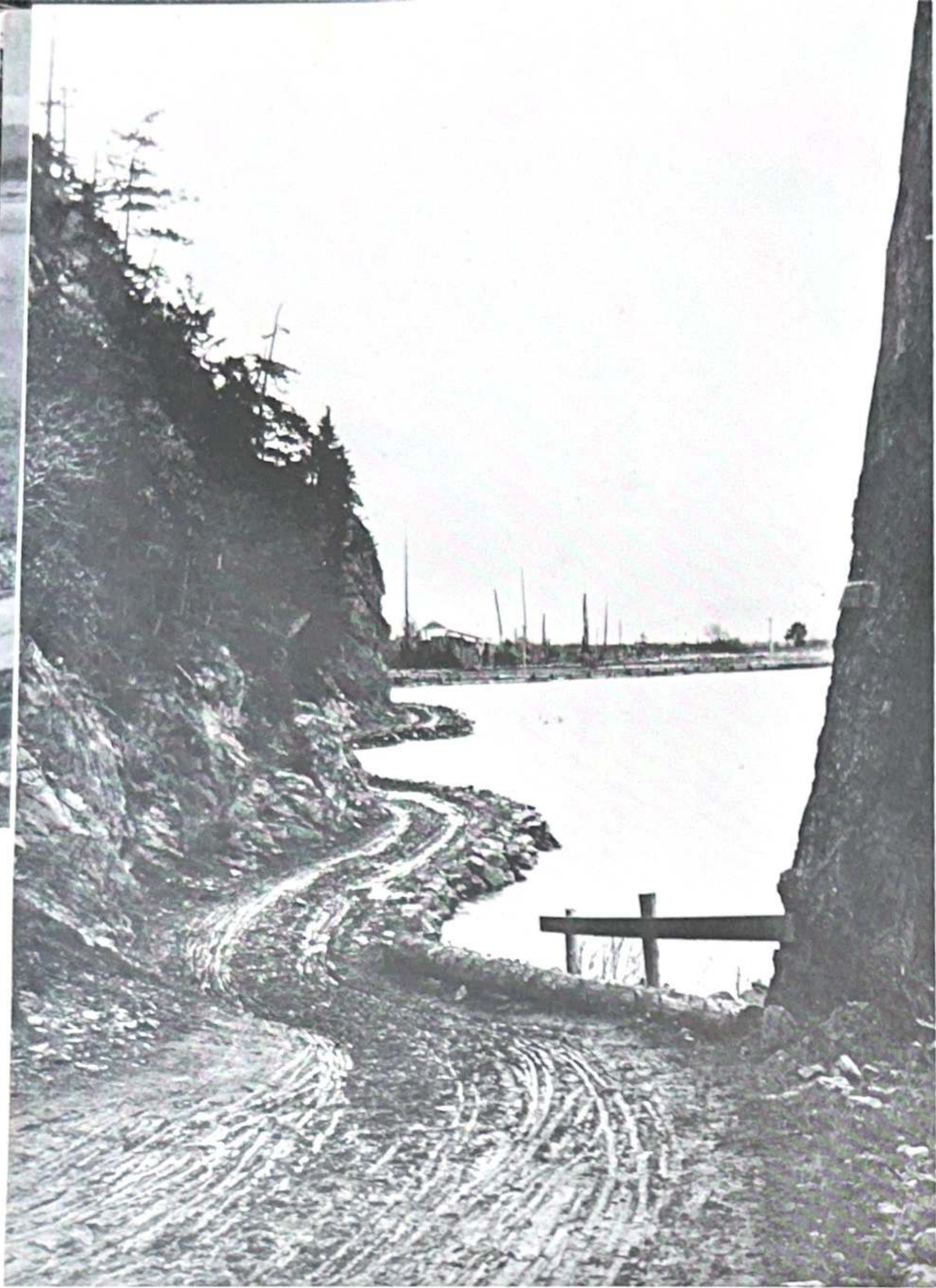
both made speeches in the foreground.

*Picture from the Skagit County Historical Museum*

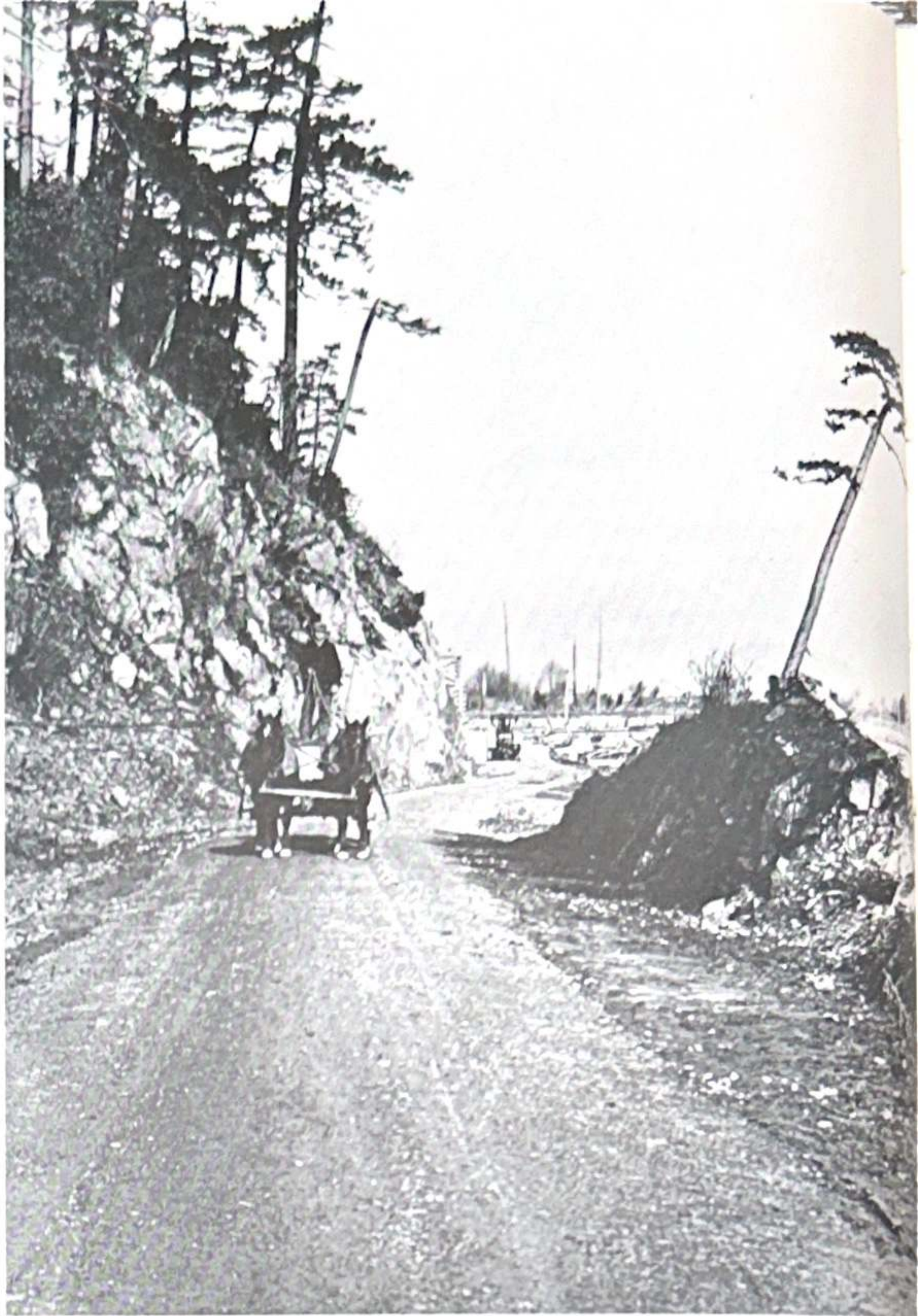
Dedication of first bridge over the Skagit River at Mount Vernon in 1893. Henry McLean and Judge Cowan who







The road into Anacortes near Weaverling Spit in 1909, skirting the foot of the rocky bluff on a narrow fill.  
*From the collection of Wallie Funk*



The road into Anacortes near Weaverling Spit after it has been improved by many layers of gravel and crushed rock, packed down by the steam roller in the background. Such a macadamized road was almost a pavement, though it lacked a binder other than water.  
*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

Building a road with teams and scrapers about 1910. A steam roller was used to pack it down after the grading was done and the gravel applied. This road ran east from Milltown to the present location of I-5.

*From the Owen Tronsdal collection*





Henry Kaiser demonstrating his paving mixture used on the Avon-Allen Road. L to r: 3. Grant Franklin, 6. Silas Butler, 7. E. A. Sisson, 8. Mr. Sullivan, 9. Bill Knutzen, 11. Henry Kaiser (almost hidden).  
From Fred Butler



trians from the sea of mud in the winter months — there were no storm sewers until around 1910. Sidewalks were also of wood. They were cheap to build but had a way of floating away to new and unwanted locations in floods — many towns in the area were flooded more than once in this period.

Anacortes started replacing its worn plank streets with pavement in 1912 and at about the same time most of the other towns of the county were planning storm sewers, concrete sidewalks, and pavements for their main thoroughfares. Mount Vernon finished paving several blocks of First Street in October, 1911, and celebrated with a Pow Wow which featured a big parade and dancing in the street. For several more years Pow Wows were held annually in the summer months when weather was more dependable.

The first pavement of a country road was "the Dollar Way," a stretch between Sedro Woolley and Burlington. The Pacific Northwest Traction Com-

pany (later the Puget Sound Power and Light Company) in 1911 was engaged in building a branch interurban line to connect Sedro Woolley with the main tracks which were to pass through Burlington and wanted a right of way down the existing wagon road. The Superior Portland Cement Company at Concrete, wishing to demonstrate the value of its products in road building, offered to surface the new route. As a result the interurban got its right of way and the county got its first concrete pavement surfaced with asphalt for the nominal cost of \$1. "The Dollar Way" was the trade name for the process but the highway quickly became the Dollar Road to the people of the county.

A concrete pavement was laid along the McLean Road in 1918. Henry Kaiser, then a young contractor with a reputation to make, persuaded the county to pave the Avon-Allen Road with an asphalt mixture of his own devising. The paved

Anacortes began paving Commercial in 1912. Road-making machinery had not yet been developed so the work is being done by hand with simple tools.

From the collection of Wallie Funk







Anacortes taxi about 1907. Hacks met all boats and trains and served as taxis about town. Note the rubber tires, carriage lamps, and closed body of this elegant carriage.  
*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

road was opened in 1919. The asphalt proved durable but the inadequate foundations in time made it a very wavy surface as the buried puncheons and gravel sank in the swampy peat soil. Kaiser's original pavement still lies beneath the present road, however; the original concrete of the McLean Road, too, supports the layers of asphalt which have been added in the 60 years since it was first paved. In 1918 the Pacific Highway (Route 99) was being hard surfaced between Burlington and Mount Vernon.

The engineering triumph of its day was the bridge over the Baker River at Concrete which was dedicated in June, 1918; it spanned the stream

in a single arch of reinforced concrete, the longest single span in the world at that time, and served until 1974, replaced then as the highway crossing not because it was worn out or unsafe, but because it was too narrow and required the road to bend sharply at each end to approach it. It is still in use as a local road.

As roads improved the numbers and kinds of vehicles using them increased. Farm families needed to own a farm wagon that could be transformed into a hay rack by the addition of spreading side pieces or adapted for other uses by various modifications. A lighter springed vehicle was useful for transporting the family. One popular type

Eleanor Smith and Nadine Risbell in a pony cart behind George Risbell's horse, Goldie, about 1903.

*Picture from Skagit County Historical Museum*

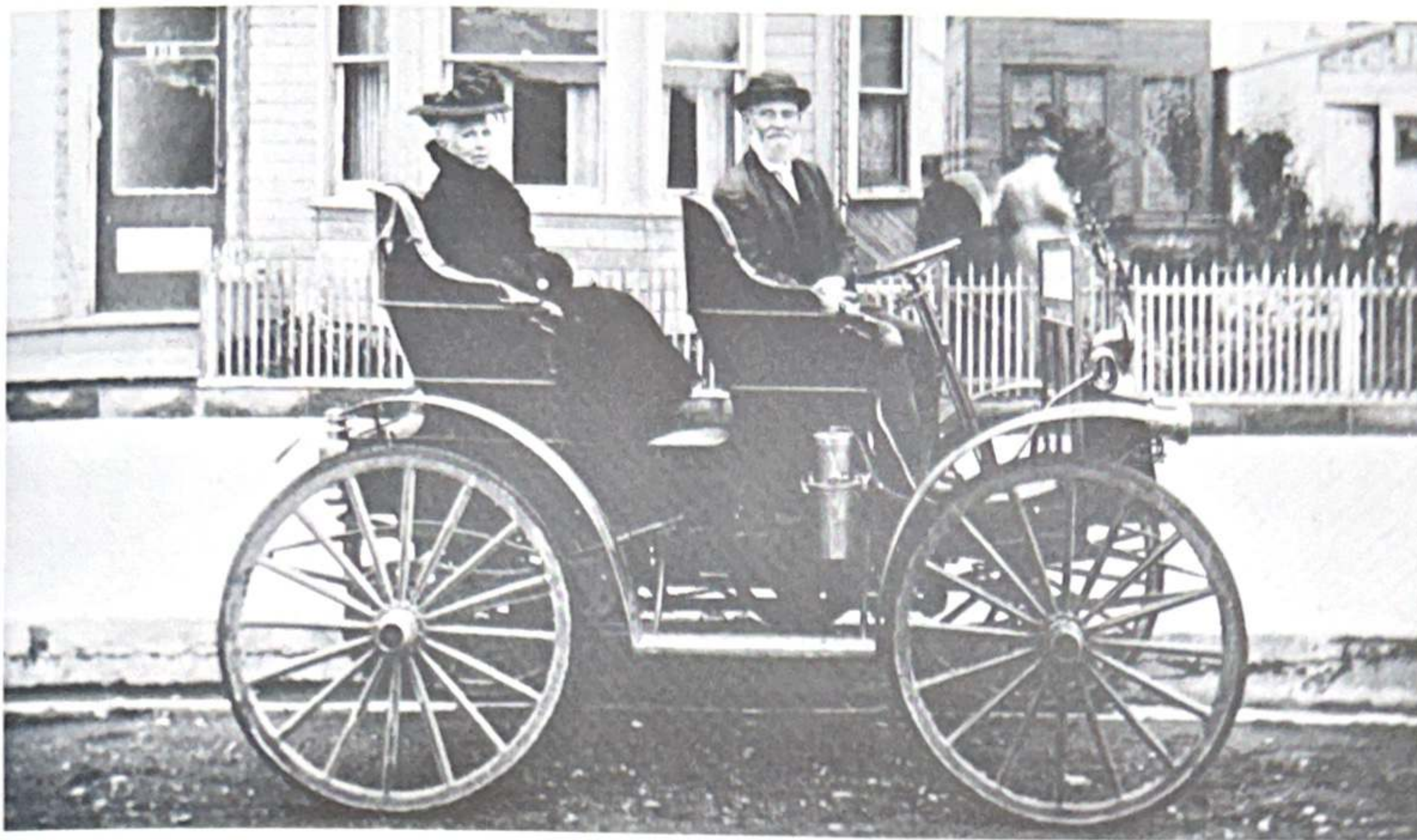


This is the way the mail was delivered along all the Rural Free Delivery routes from the time they began around 1900 until automobiles and paved roads displaced the horses and wagons. The man may be Charlie Warren who delivered the mail on Route 4 for many years.

*From a postcard owned by Margaret Benedict Southwick*







"Horseless carriage" of 1900. Probably Mr. and Mrs. D'Arcy of Anacortes. The cylinder below the driver contains the acetylene gas for the headlights. The engine is under either the front or back seat. Picture from John Ball

was the general purpose spring-wagon, a box bed with two seats which could be removed when necessary; for ordinary use it had no top covering. There were more stylish kinds of carriages with tops and other protection from the weather—buggies and surreys, some with fringes and rubber-rimmed wheels.

Every town had a livery stable where there were horses and a choice of vehicle for hire, with or without a driver. The traveling salesman rented a buggy to carry him and his sample cases. The home seeker hired one to go out to inspect the tracts of land available for purchase. The new arrival needed a wagon and driver to take his goods from the railway to his home. A young buck might want to take his girl riding or to a picnic in style, knowing that the horse would find the way

home without the driver needing to handle the reins. On a fair day the men of the town with time on their hands leaned their chairs back against the front of the livery stable, the best place in town to keep track of what was going on.

The 1900s ushered in the first automobiles, looking like the horseless carriages which they were. The finest carriages had rubber tires, a solid rim of it around the wheels, and that is what the first automobiles had. There was a dashboard like a buggy but no windshield; the driver sat on the right side as the driver of horses did; the engine was hidden under either the front or back seat. Even the lights were made to look like lanterns and were fed by acetylene gas which had to be lighted with a match at nightfall. For some years automobiling required a special costume, a long



The J. O. Rudene home on Pleasant Ridge in 1905 with the family car and some family members in the foreground. Notice that the steering wheel is on the right hand side, the side where the driver of a horse always sat. The tires are pneumatic but are mounted directly on the rim so that, in case of a flat, the car had to be jacked up, the tire and tube removed, the tube repaired, and tire and tube put back on the wheel and pumped up by hand.

Picture from Lou Carlson





Mr. and Mrs. Dan Wilder of Anacortes and their children, Mike and Arlouene in one of the earliest cars, perhaps about 1905. The steering wheel is still on the right but the engine is under a hood instead of under the seat. The back seat has doors, but there seems to be no place for either a windshield or a top. The horn is the squeeze bulb type and carriage lamps adorn both sides of the dashboard.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

Buick touring car of about 1912. L to r (front seat) Mr. Pope, Fred W. Kill, behind the wheel; (back seat) Mrs. John Kill, Mrs. Pope, John Kill (first president of Skagit County Dairymen's Assoc.). The tool kit is on the running board. There are headlights on the car but there are still carriage lamps back of the hood. The six lugs on each wheel rim show that these were "dismountable rims," so there is probably a spare tire on the back of the car below the top which is folded back. There are brake drums only on the rear wheels.

*Picture from Amy Morris Kugelberg*



This 1915 Model T Ford was the first automobile owned in the Finn Settlement. Note the crank, lights, wheels and windshield. In the background is the home of Isaac and Mary Waglund. In and on the car l to r: Albert Lombolo, Ford Pierson, Vernice Ranta, Elmer Berry, an unknown friend, Mrs. Lizzie Hendrickson, Isaac Waglund, Mrs. Mary Waglund, Helmer Waglund, Mr. Lindbloom.

*Picture from Edwin A. Kittila*





Studebaker seven passenger touring car of 1917 with top and side curtains up. The transparent panels in the curtains were of isinglass; when not in use the side curtains were stored under the back seat. The top could be left up or folded back. The open windshield offered ventilation and sometimes it was necessary to open it in order to see the road since there were no windshield wipers. People l to r: Helen Woodburn, Robert Woodburn (owner of the car), Globe Ball Woodburn, Puget E. Ball, Cora Nelson. Picture from John Ball

enveloping cloak or "duster" for protection from fumes and dust, tie-down hats for the ladies and caps for the men to face the wind of speeds up to 15 miles an hour.

In 1905 newspaper advertisements were seeking dealers rather than customers. Between that time and 1920 the number of cars licensed in the county had risen to 4,800. The horseless carriage had developed a form of its own though the open touring car was still the standard. The steering gear had been moved to the left side. The car had a top which could be raised or lowered and side curtains of fabric with isinglass panels, stored under the back seat, which could be put up in case of rain. Windshield wipers were not yet standard equipment though various types could be bought and installed. By 1920 all cars, except the Model T Ford, had batteries which operated the lights and the spark plugs, and a few had self-starters, but most engines still had to be started with a hand crank. Luggage was carried on the running board, heaters were warm "auto robes," turn signals were assorted hand waving motions, and rear-view mirrors were optional equipment. Many cars had bumpers.

Pneumatic tires gave a smoother ride over rough roads than hard rubber but also brought trials and tribulations. Punctures had to be repaired on the road since tires and tubes were mounted directly on the wheels which were firmly attached to the axles. Each flat tire initiated a wrestling match; the axle had to be jacked up, the tire pried off with a set of flat iron bars, the hole in the tube located and patched (a tire patch-



One of the first Model T Fords on Marine Drive in Anacortes in 1910. In it are James Andrew Mitchell, Martha Ellen Mitchell and their family. Picture from Wm. Judd

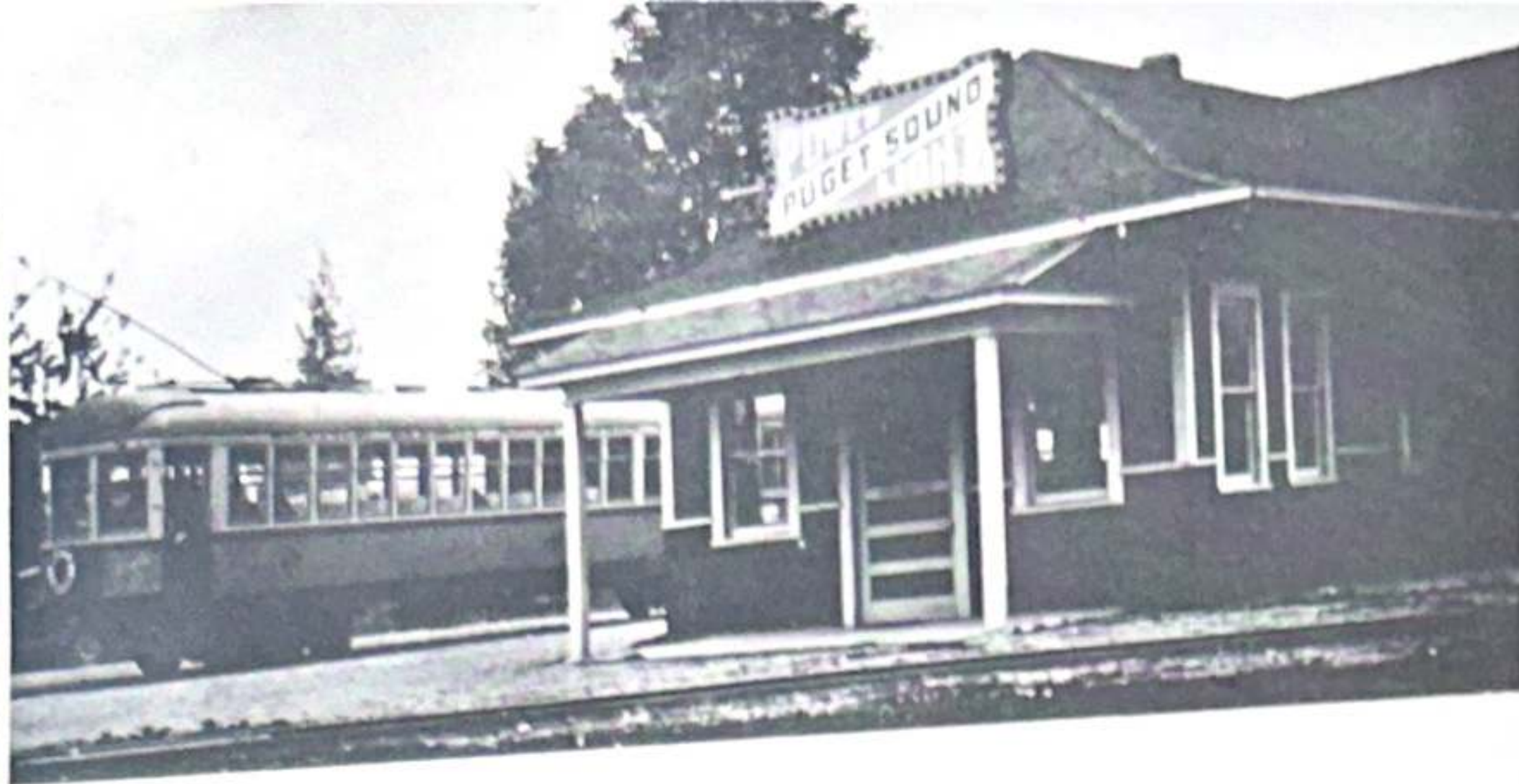
*Walt Mitchell is my father's father-in-law. He was born in 1860.*

ing kit was standard equipment), and then the whole process reversed to get the tire back on the wheel. After this the hand tire pump hopefully inflated the inner tube. If the tube didn't inflate the tire was wrestled off again and a second search made for another leak. A full tool box came with the car — the driver himself had to provide gloves, overalls, and a good store of patience.

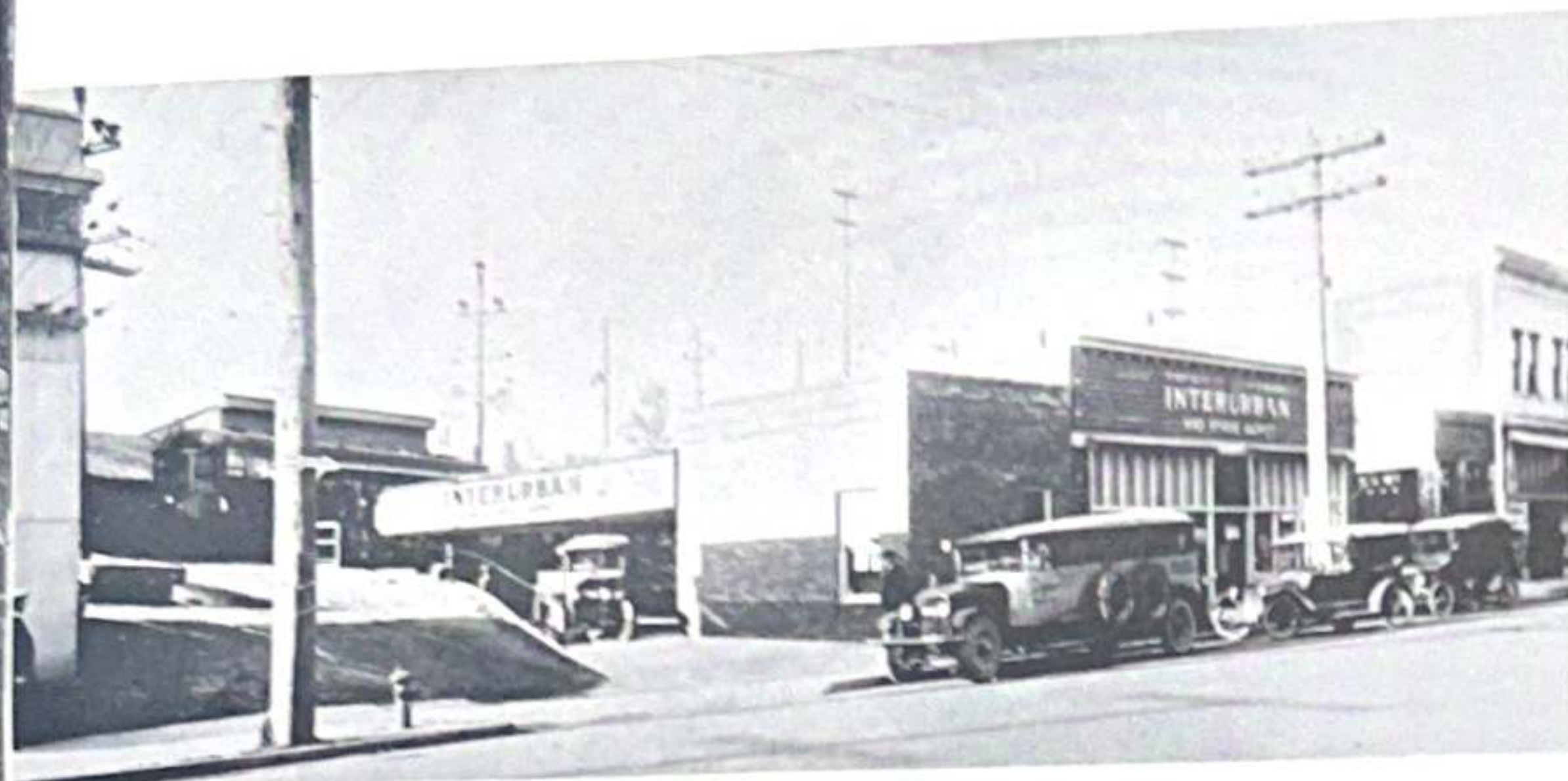
Demountable rims appeared after 1910 and were a great improvement. Spare tires on rims and already inflated could be carried; it was still a job to pry off the rim with the flat tire but at least it could now be taken to a shop to have the tube patched and the tire inflated. Tire mileage improved as time passed — instead of wearing out in 2,000 or 3,000 miles, tires sometimes lasted for as much as 10,000 miles.

The Model T Ford differed from other cars in a multitude of ways, including price, and was in its heyday from 1910 to 1927 when it was replaced by the Model A. In 1909 a Model T won the race from New York to the A.Y.P. in Seattle over incredible roads. The car then had no self-starter for it had no battery. Its lights and plugs operated from a magneto. When the car was traveling fast its lights were dim; if bright lights were needed the driver threw it into low gear with a jerk by pushing a foot pedal and the lights flared up instantly. To make a sudden stop it was possible simultaneously to push on the foot brake and throw the engine into both low gear and reverse; it stopped the car and did not damage the motor. Gas was fed by gravity from a tank under the front seat cushions. If a hill was very steep and the gas



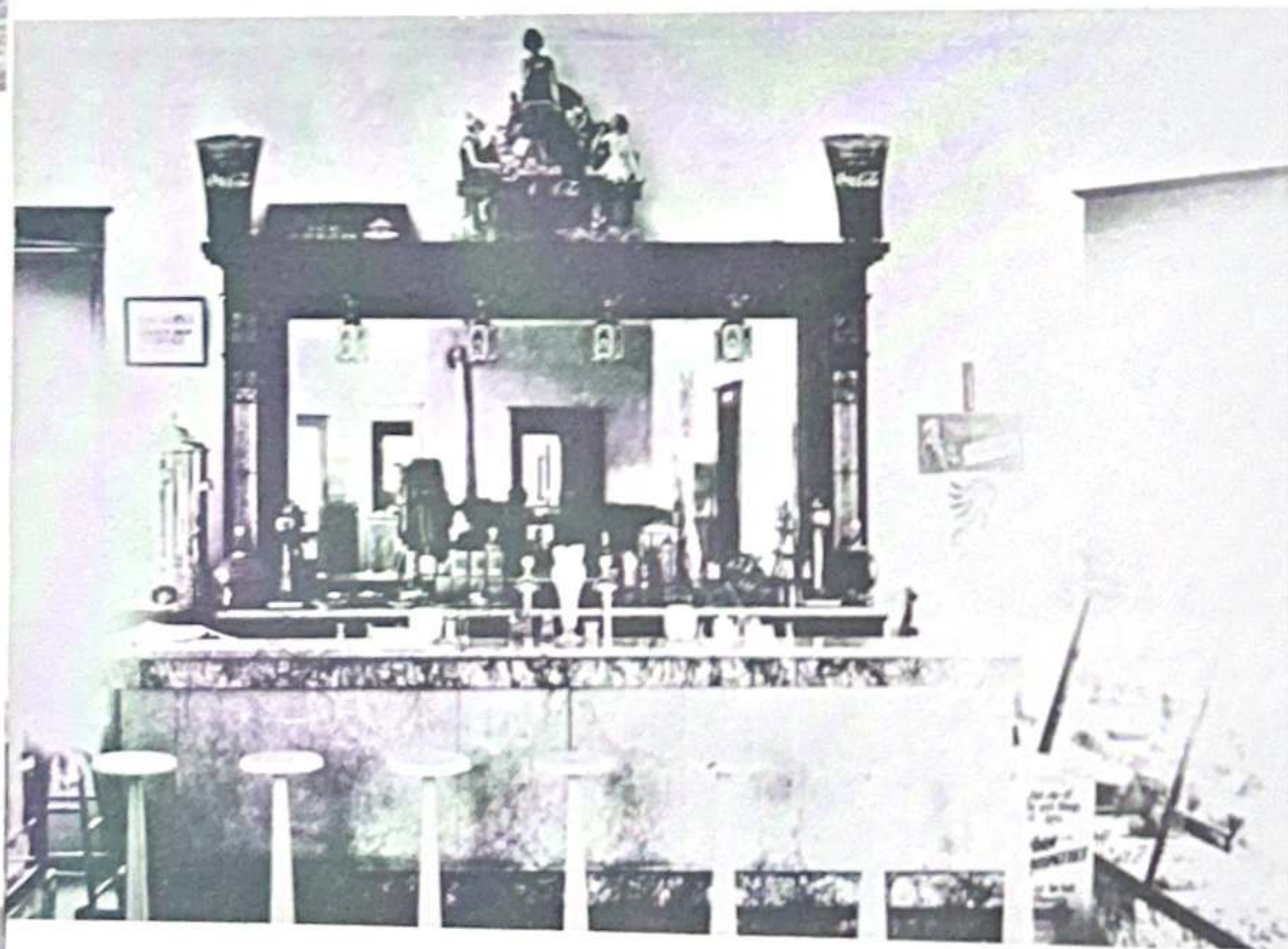


The interurban depot in Burlington.  
Picture from Puget Sound Power and Light Company

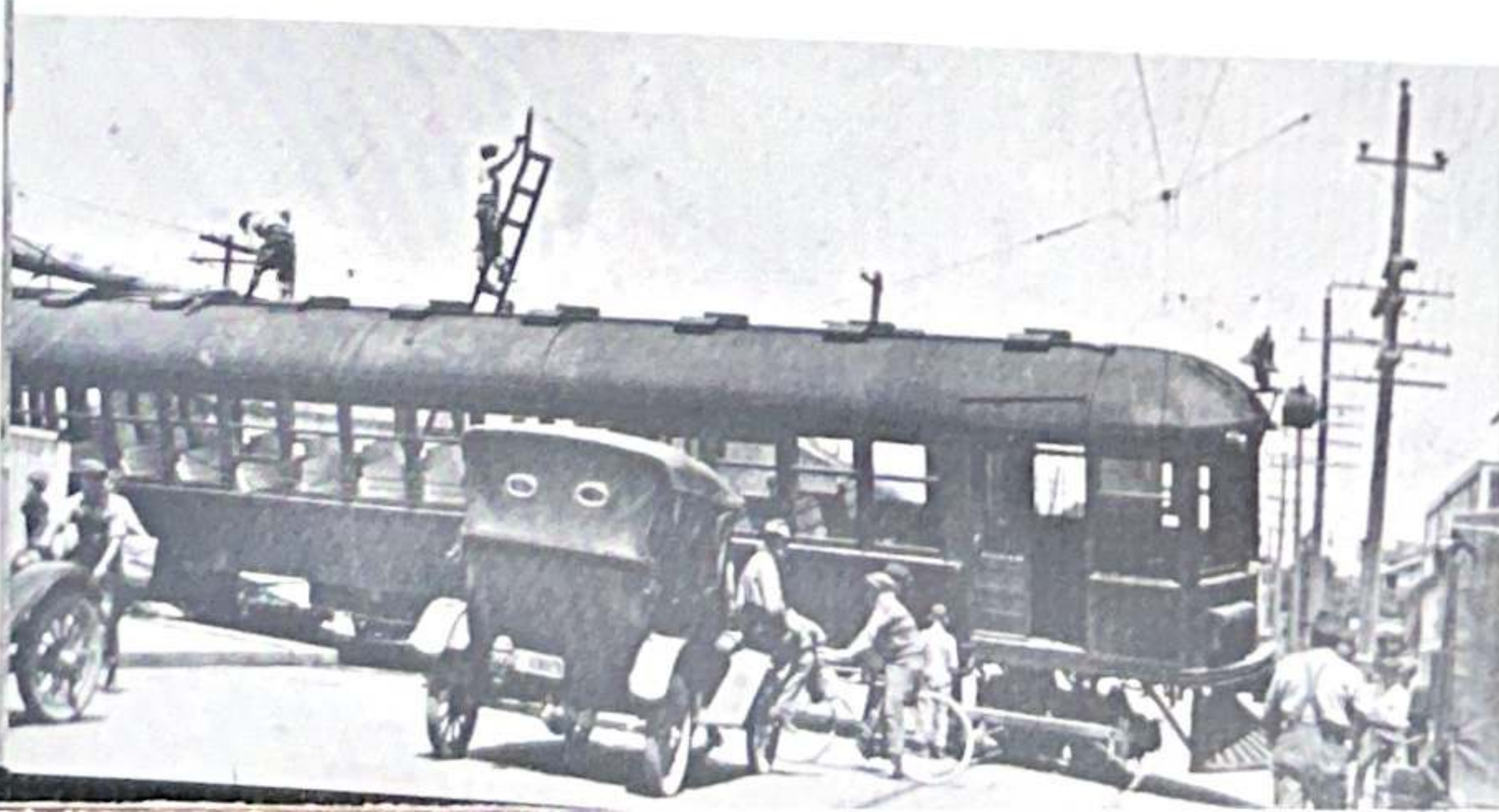


The Interurban and Stage Depot in Mount Vernon. This depot stood about where Vaux Pharmacy is in 1975. The old interurban tracks are used by the Mount Vernon Terminal Railway which takes freight to and from Stokely-Van Camp.

Picture from Puget Sound Power and Light Company



The lunch counter in the Mount Vernon interurban depot.  
Collection of Andy Loft



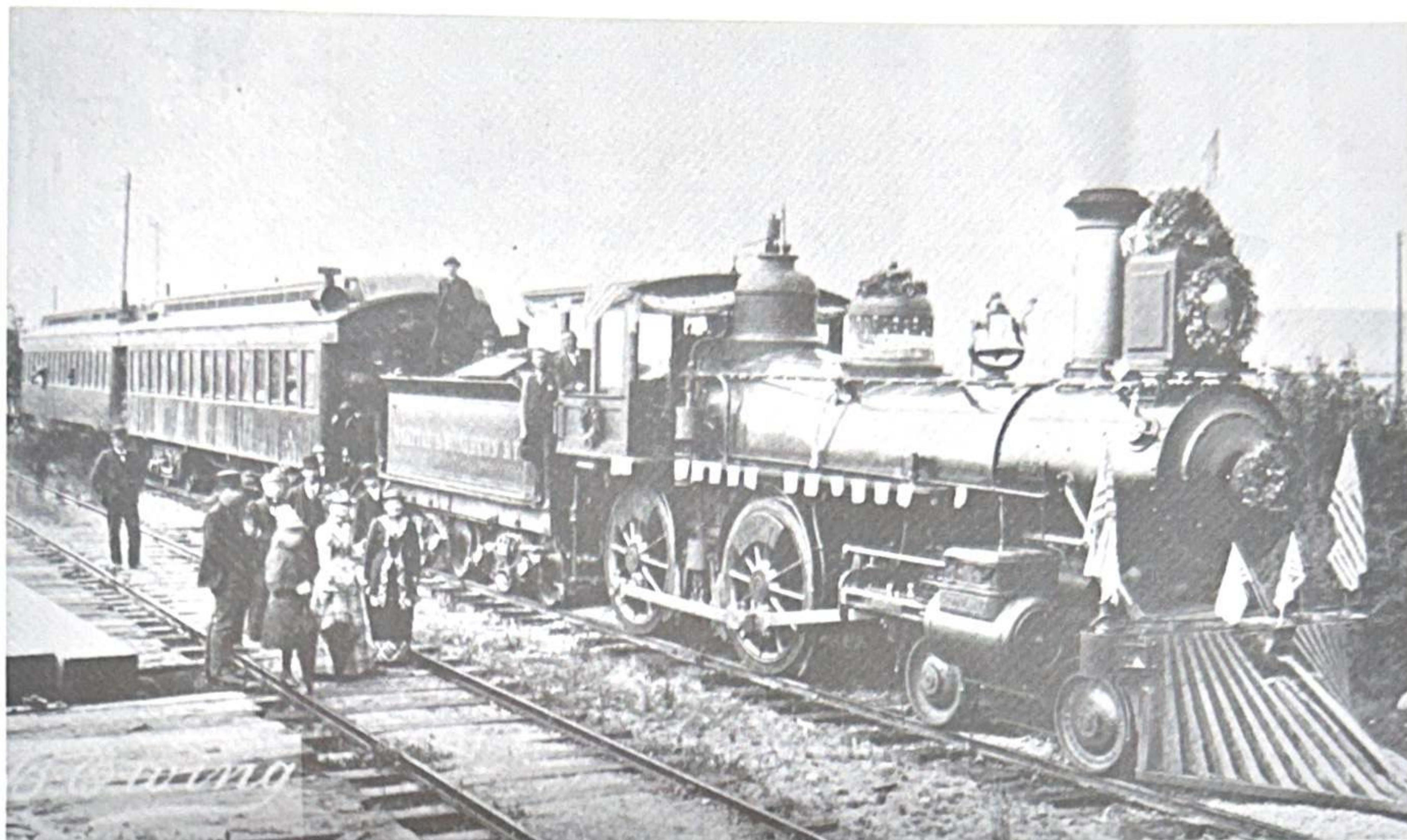
Interurban car derailed in 1921 just north of the Carnation Milk plant in Mount Vernon.  
John Locken

PACIFIC NORTHWEST TRACTION COMPANY				TO	FROM	FARE PAID
<b>Good for one continuous ride between Stations punched in margin.</b> <b>SUBJECT TO TARIFF REGULATIONS</b> <b>Form C 1</b> <i>W. S. Sewall</i> Manager				BELLINGHAM		\$1
				SO. BELLINGHAM		\$2
				HAPPY VALLEY		\$3
				HIBRIDGE		20
				SUMMIT TRAIL		30
				INSPIRATION PT.		40
				GRANDVIEW		50
				CHUCKANUT		60
				WILDCAT COVE		70
				STATE PARK		80
				CLAYTON BAY		90
				SEAWOOD		1
				SANISH		2
				COWGILL		3
				BLANCHARD		4
				EDISON		5
				SUNSET		6
				FIELD		7
				RORAY		8
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JAN. 1 13 23 FEB. 2 14 24 MAR. 3 15 25 APRIL 4 16 26 MAY 5 17 27 JUNE 6 18 28 JULY 7 19 29 AUG. 8 20 30 SEPT. 9 21 31 OCT. 10 22 NOV. 11 DEC. 12	BELLINGHAM STAGE EVERETT	* * *	HALF * FARE	BURLINGTON		
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				MILLER		
				SCHROEDER		
				DEMPSEY		
				STERLING		
				KINSEY		
				HERITAGE		
				AUSTIN		
				SEDRO-WOOLLEY		
				CONWAY		
				MILLTOWN		
				STANWOOD		
				WOODLAND SCH.		
				SILVANA		
				ISLAND SCHOOL		
				HILL'S COR.		
				KRUSE		
				MARYSVILLE		
				EVERETT		
				SEATTLE		

Interurban ticket.  
From the collection of Andy Loft



Early train into Anacortes, probably in 1890. The railway then was the Seattle and Northern, later purchased by the Great Northern.  
From the collection of Wallie Funk

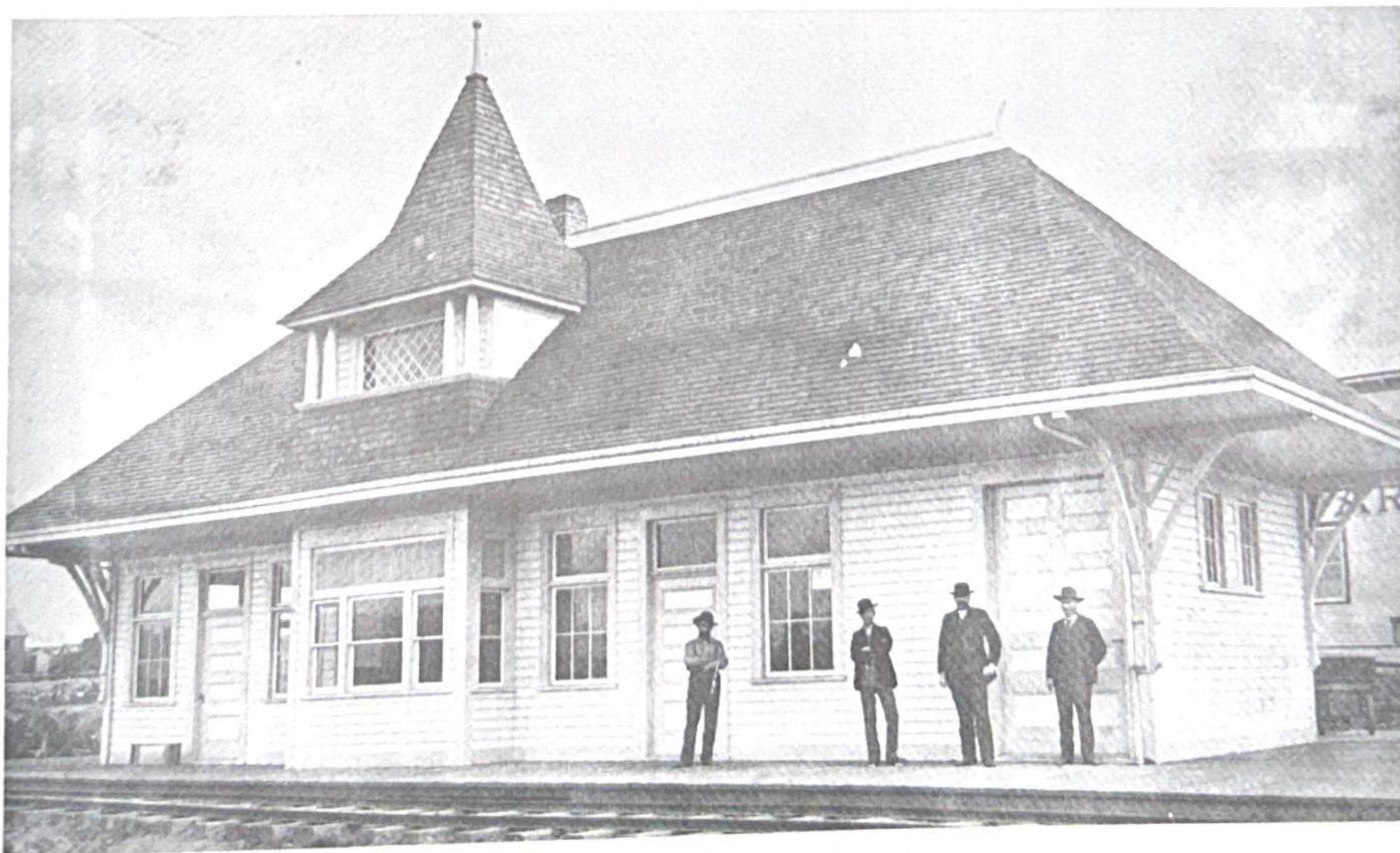


in the tank too low, the engine would die from lack of fuel but it was possible to overcome the obstacle by backing the car, putting the engine below the level of the tank. For the period of bad roads with a hump in the middle the Model T was better adapted than heavier, lower, and more expensive cars. In 1917 a Model T cost \$360 F.O.B. Detroit, bumpers and shock absorbers extra.

A new railroad was built into the county in 1912 almost a generation after the other kind of lines began operation. The Pacific Northwest Traction Company projected a system of electric

cars, an interurban, to run from California to Canada, connecting all the cities of the west coast. Segments of the line opened in 1912 between Seattle and Everett and between Mount Vernon and Bellingham, with stages running between the stations of Everett and Mount Vernon to make the system continuous. The feeder line from Sedro Woolley to Burlington made connections with the main line. The interurban offered frequent service, stopped at many more stations than the trains, and was clean and comfortable. It afforded excellent service for about 15 years but its timing was un-

Train depot at 10th and N, built in 1890 and used until the brick depot opened at the 7th Street location in 1911.  
From the collection of Wallie Funk



*This old depot was known to be 20th St. The depot was built on 7th. The Rail Dock Bros. found it was it will stay or move to 25th. Come + leave and you'll see what a great improvement.*





The brick depot of the Great Northern on 7th to which it moved in 1911 from the original wooden structure built a few blocks away in 1890.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

fortunate — it came just as highways were being paved, private cars were multiplying, and the flexibility of motor stages was being discovered.

This was not yet apparent in 1920, however. There probably has never been a time when local public transportation was better than in that year. Steamers plied the Sound, sternwheelers were still making regular runs on the Skagit River, the railroads operated several trains a day on the north-south and the east-west lines, interurban cars ran frequently, and stages serviced the smaller towns not on the rail lines. Smaller communities had

their river ferries, Anacortes was connected with Guemes Island by an auto ferry, and a similar ferry ran from Dewey on Fidalgo Island to Cornet Bay on Whidbey to the south. On the commercial side the picture was equally rosy. Competition of rails and ships kept freight rates down. The county's products, logs, lumber, shingles, fish, farm produce, seeds and grains, cattle, dairy products, hay, were finding their way to wider and wider markets as the world's manufactured goods came back in return. The second generation of pioneers had brought the county into the mainstream by 1920.



Railway station of the Great Northern at Mount Vernon in 1911 with President Taft's campaign train approaching. Picture taken from Kincaid Street.

*Skagit County Historical Museum*





The railway station at Rockport, the end of the line for the trains which ran from Anacortes up the valley of the Skagit. In the days of steam locomotives the water tank

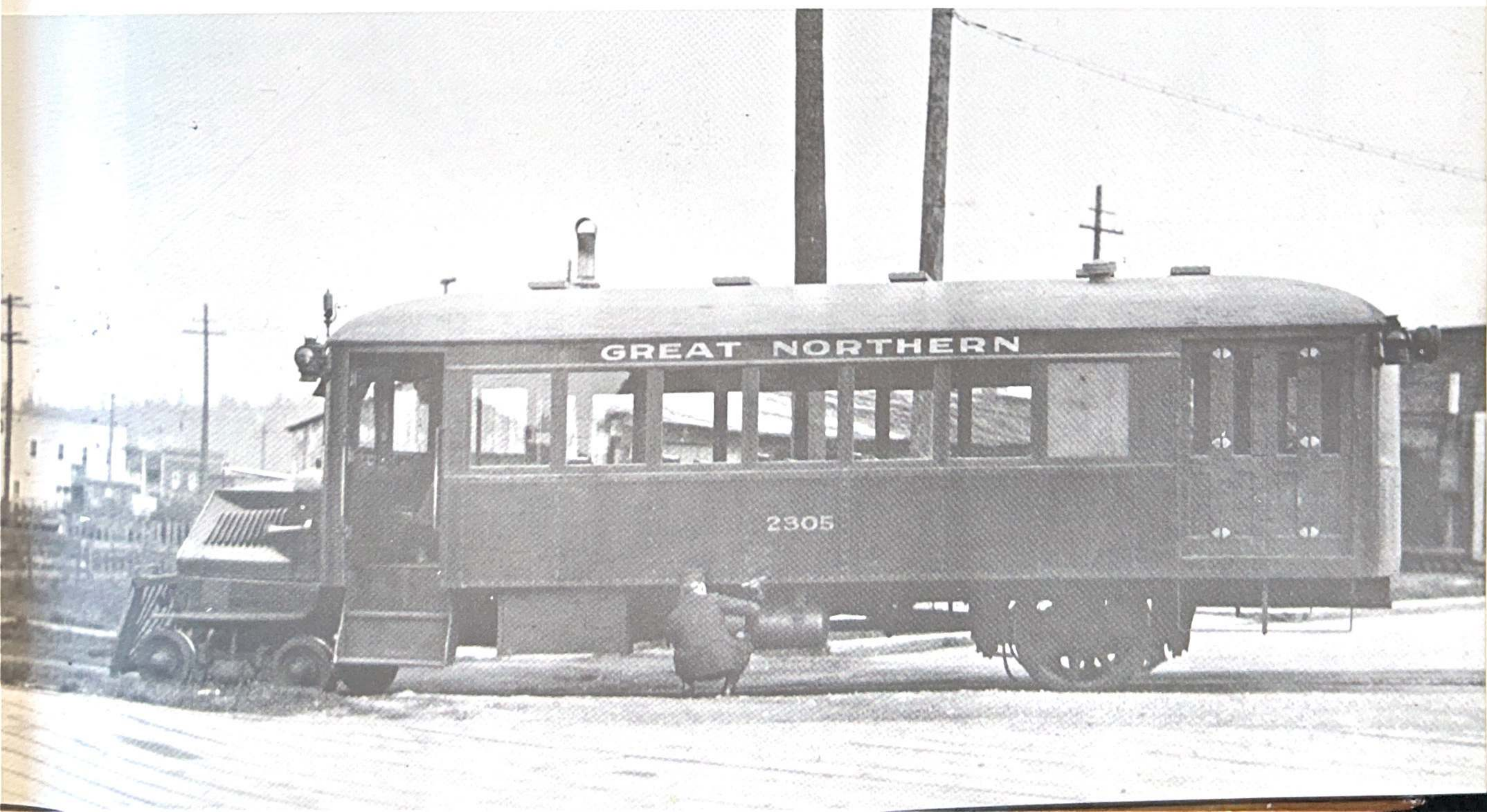
for filling their boilers was a standard feature at necessary intervals along the line.

*Picture from Tom Benton*

The "Galloping Goose" which replaced passenger trains running into Anacortes as the passenger business

declined.

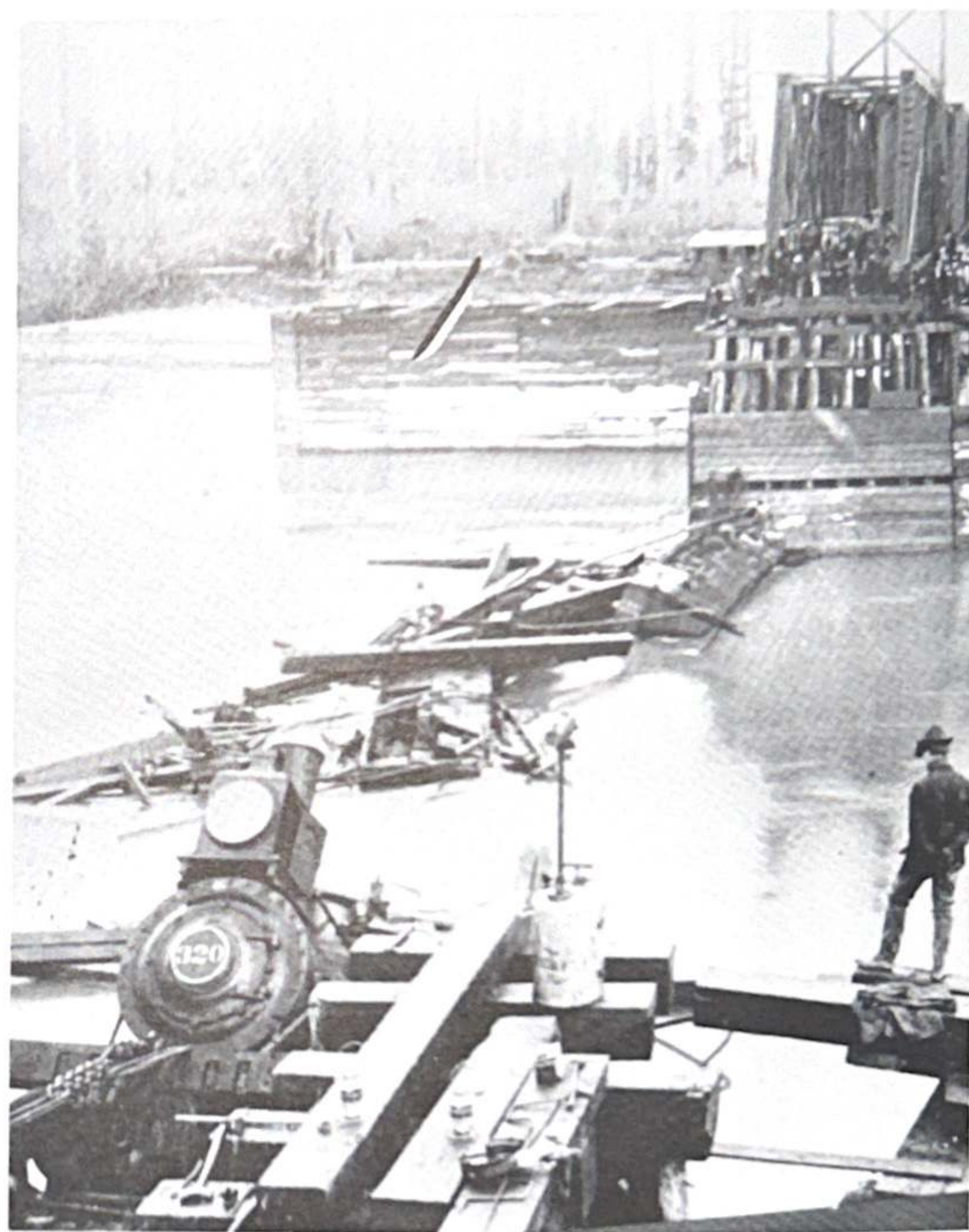
*Picture from Ernie Inkster  
From the collection of Wallie Funk*





Overland car of about 1911 which was run as a stage between Mount Vernon and Stanwood. The girls are not identified.

*Picture from John Locken*



Wreck of the Great Northern freight train at the Skagit River bridge at Riverside in 1903. The bridge collapsed when the locomotive had just reached the south bank and the cars pulled the engine back into the river where it can be seen at the right of the picture. Most of the freight cars went into the stream but one still stood on the bridge. The bridge had been weakened by the derailment of a car of logs earlier and repairs had not been completed when this freight was signalled to cross. Bundles of shingles floated down the river from the wreck. The engineer, Ted Heatherington, and the fireman, Tom Doran, were drowned.

*Picture from Walter S. Burton via Skagit County Historical Museum*





## Chapter II

# STEAM, RAILS, AND LOGS

In early Skagit County many fine stands of timber were found adjacent to the rivers, streams and Puget Sound itself. Early settlers cut this timber to clear land to live on. As timber adjacent to the waterways vanished the settlers found they were not equipped to harvest inland forests. It was at this time that the logging industry came into existence.

As the bite of the cross-cut saw and axe continued in ever-increasing numbers the loggers soon found themselves penetrating the dense Skagit forests. The waterways once used to float the logs to the sawmills were now left behind and the logger had to devise a new form of transportation. How he provided this transportation often meant suc-

cess or failure to his financial venture.

For short hauls many early loggers used "skid roads," crude aisles through the timber usually having short wooden poles laid across them over which logs were "skidded" with horses or oxen. The cross-poles in the skid roads were greased and the logs "snipped" or beveled on the ends to allow easier movement.

The ingenuity of the logger has always been, and is to this day, a thing of wonder. His operations were limited only by his imagination.

In addition to a variety of skid road operations timber was also brought out of the woods by flumes . . . wooden aqueducts which brought logs by water to the millponds.



Logging by ox team at Birdsvie in 1892.  
A Darius Kinsey picture from Charles Dwelley

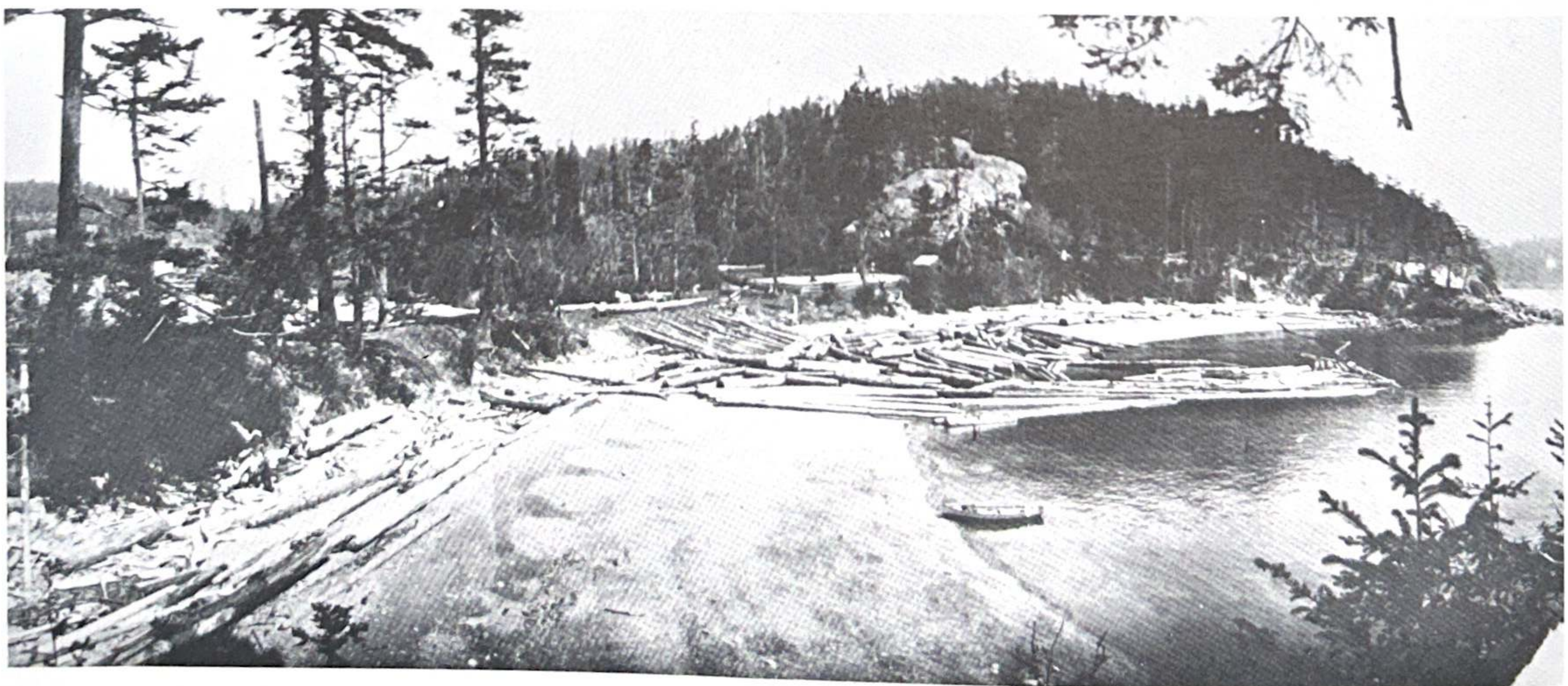


Logging Bay View Ridge about 1900. Horses are pulling a turn of logs along a skid road which was greased with dog-fish oil to help the logs slide more easily. The people are not identified.

*Skagit County  
Historical Museum*



Fordson tractor re-built into "Pole Road Locomotive" by Skagit Steel & Iron Works. Scott Brothers, Concrete, used this type of logging operation.  
*Skagit Corporation*

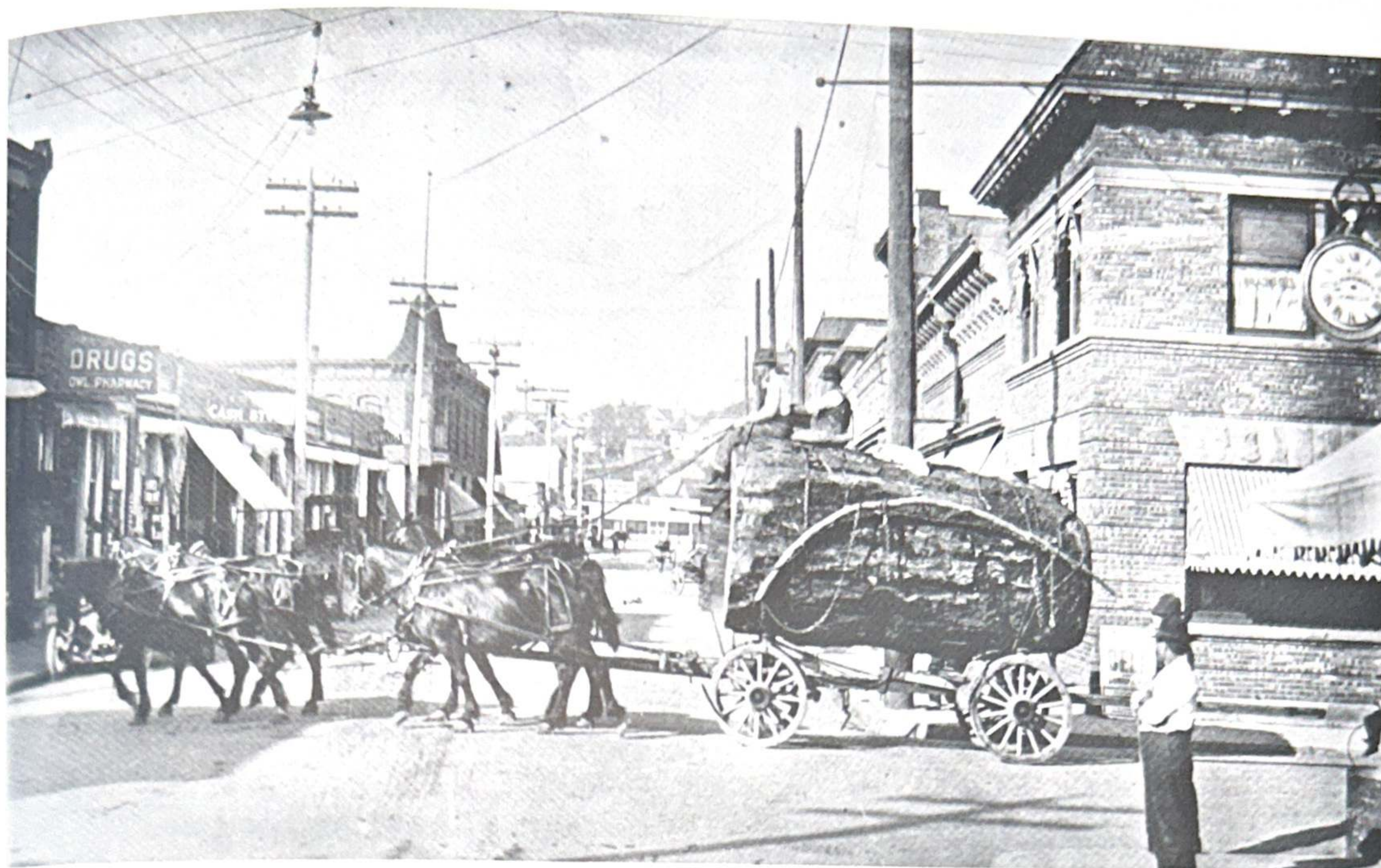


Logging at Rosario about 1900. The logs are being hauled by horses over skid roads to the incline made of logs in the center of the picture. There they were rolled down

into the water and rafted to be towed to the mill. In this picture the tide is out and much of the partially completed log boom is on the beach.

*Picture from P. H. Dunlap*





In 1913, Slosson Logging Company operated a short logging railroad on Lincoln Hill, in Mount Vernon. Just south of Lincoln School the logs were re-loaded from railroad cars to these wagons to be driven down Lincoln

Hill, through Mount Vernon and dumped into the Skagit River. Ernest Rothrock operated this wagon, seen here crossing First Street on Gates.

Ernest Rothrock

*Main Street (Mt. Vernon)*

Prior to 1904, Pat McCoy was logging with oxen in the Bow-Edison area. Stan Butler recalls that Pat decided to make an improvement over the oxen and purchased an elephant. Stan added, "It didn't work out too well."

First attempts to log by railroad led men to use wooden rails and anything they could find to pull the cars. Horses, mules and oxen worked these primitive "tram" roads. Amid those early methods to move logs, one mode of transportation loomed as having the most promise of efficiency: steel rails and steam power.

The *Puget Sound Mail* of July 28, 1883, stated that Gage's railroad, above Mount Vernon, used a steam locomotive that was underpowered but could haul 40- to 50,000 feet per day. This was probably the first steam logging railroad in Skagit County.

In February, 1887, the *Northwestern Lumberman* reported 5 miles of 56-inch gauge railroad at Blanchard. They "use mules at present but will put on locomotive soon." This proved true, for in 1888 a shiny new locomotive arrived from the Baldwin Locomotive Works. All machinery for the Blanchard Railroad was shipped in by barge as there was no other transportation available.

When the Fairhaven & Southern built from Bellingham into Sedro in 1889, the common carrier railroad became a reality in Skagit County. Lumbermen now had a standard gauge inter-connect with the outside world, and rails that led from the woods could be made to link with the entire nation.

In the 1890s more steam locomotives were arriving in the county. Early locomotives were often second-hand from nearby larger railroads but very soon loggers found these engines not suitable for their rough and uneven track. One railroad logger was asked how he spaced the ties on his line. His reply was, "We take no pains, they never stay put anyway." A flexible "back-woods" locomotive was needed for the lumber industry.

The most popular locomotive developed for logging purposes was the Shay, built by the Lima Locomotive Works in Lima, Ohio. The invention is credited to one Ephriam Shay, a Michigan logger. The first Shay was built in 1879; when the last Shay was erected in 1945 more had been sold to the State of Washington than to any other state. The Shay was distinctive in that it had the boiler offset to the left to allow three vertical cylinders



to be mounted on the right side. These cylinders propelled a drive shaft geared to all wheels through flexible joints. This arrangement allowed the powerful locomotive to crawl over very poor track and still pull a train without derailing.

Subsequent competitors to the Shay were the Heisler and Climax. The Heisler had two cylinders arranged in a "V," one on each side of the boiler, which drove an underhung, center drive shaft geared to the wheels. The Climax also had two cylinders and an underhung, center drive shaft, however, the cylinders were arranged one on each side operating parallel to the frame.

All three geared engines found success; individual loggers had their own preference. Several Skagit County operators used only Shay locomotives. Dempsey Lumber Company at Hamilton used exclusively Heisler, purchasing three of them new. The early Clear Lake Lumber Company bought Climax locomotives. English Lumber Com-

pany, Conway, at one time or another, used all three.

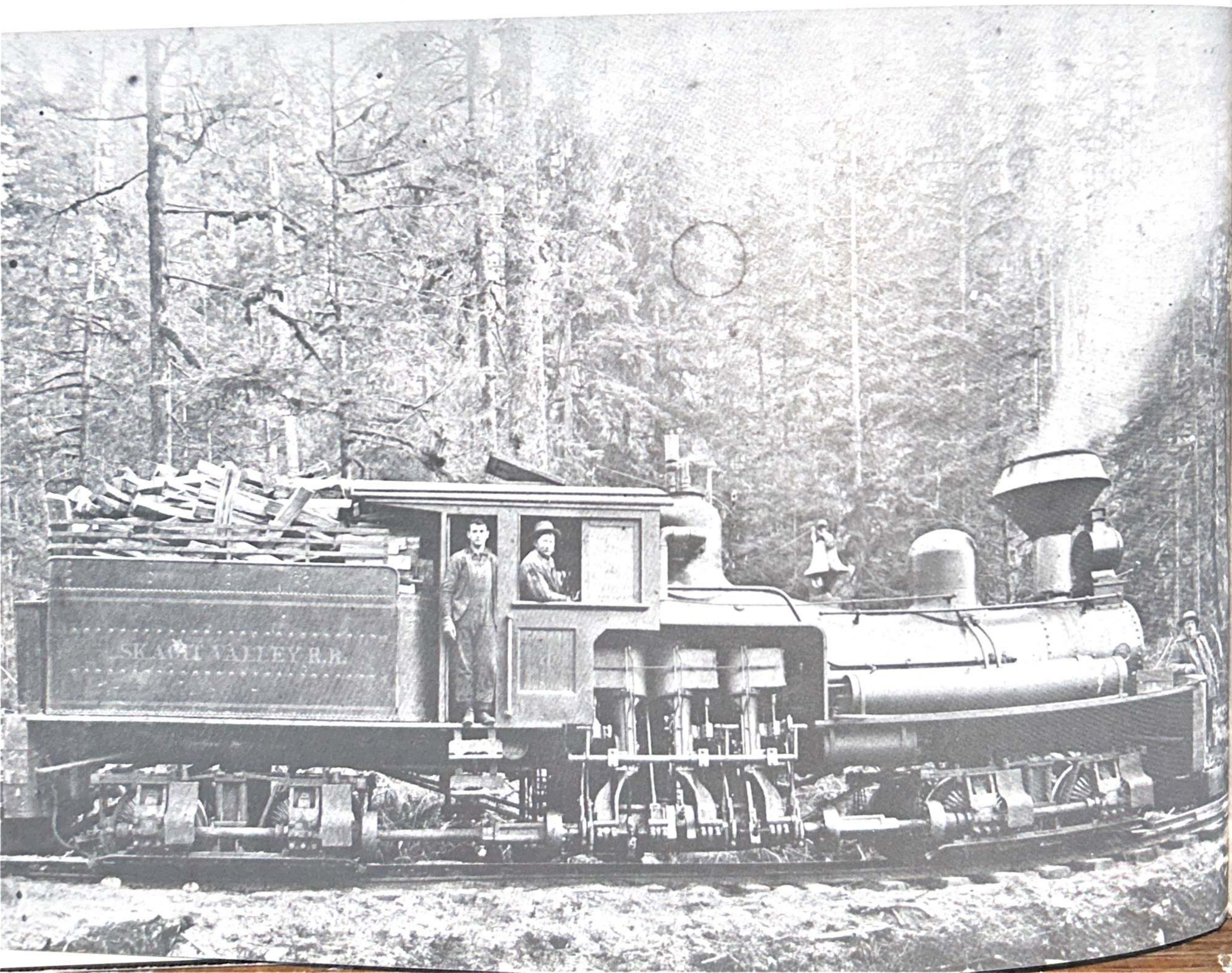
Parallel to the introduction of the steam locomotive in the woods came the introduction of the steam donkey. As the railroads advanced into the timber it became more difficult to get the logs from where they were fallen to the loading area for the railroad. Once again, steam replaced four-legged power to drag in the logs. Steam donkeys were used to bring the logs out of the brush and loading donkeys were used to load the logs on railroad cars; the donkeys were mounted on log skids to enable them to tie onto a tree or stump and winch themselves from place to place as the logging progressed. For a time early steam donkeys were only able to winch in the logs, and horses continued to be used to pull the slack cable into the woods. These "line horses" were the last animal power in the timber.

As the years passed the logging donkey bore

ENGLISH LUMBER COMPANY Shay No. 4. Early locomotives on the English line bore the lettering "Skagit

Valley R.R." This practice was later dropped. No. 4 was built in 1905.

Bill Mason





Many logging spurs were operated with little attention to preparation of road-bed. In this Mosher & McDonald scene notice the rails bending under the weight of the loads. A mechanic's vise is thoughtfully mounted on the front of the locomotive running board for "on-the-road" repair work. The little Shay was built in 1891, and named "Belle."

*Bill Mason*



offspring; these were more complex machines called yarders and skidders. The heaviest machine on logging rails was the car-mounted tower skidder. Weighing more than two locomotives it could log an entire mountainside when set up in one location; it contained its own steel "spar tree" and was an impressive machine. For decades the signal whistles of donkeys and skidders punctuated the song of the woods locomotive.

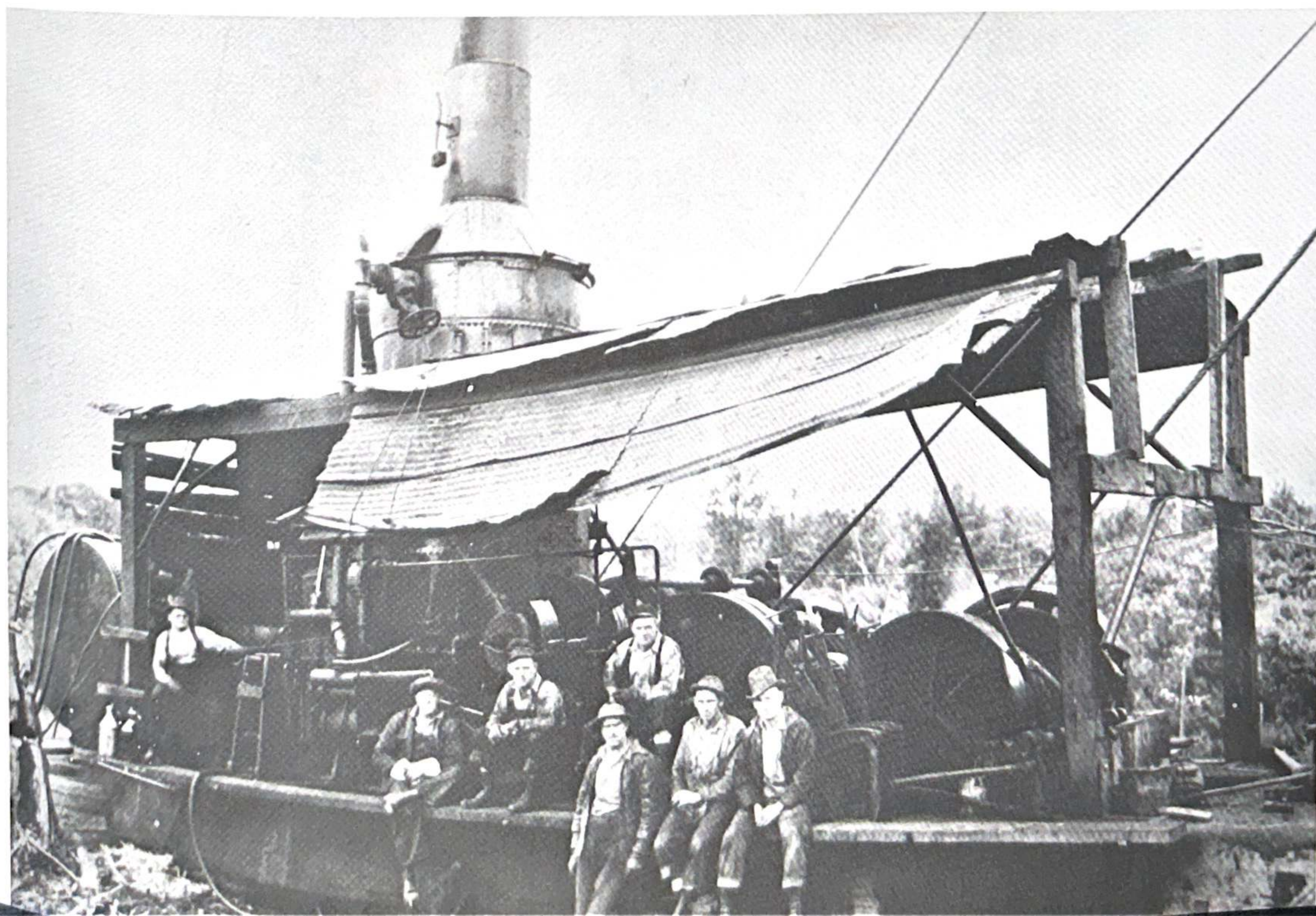
Records of early logging railroads in Skagit County are obscure. It is known there were several in operation before the turn of the century.

In 1900, Bratnober-Waite operated a mill at Clear Lake. Records from the Climax Manufacturing Company show them purchasing a new 35-ton Climax locomotive in that year. They were associated with Kennedy and O'Brien who were logging for them. A railroad was built from the

DEMPSEY LUMBER COMPANY Washington 12x14, 2-speed yarder at Camp 5, 1919. Left to right: Ed French and

Jim Hooper. Others unidentified.

*Darius Kinsey from Stan Dexter*







Above: HAMILTON LOGGING COMPANY Willamette yarder

on left and small loading donkey on right.

*John Pinelli*

Below: DEMPSEY LUMBER COMPANY Ground Lead logging showing 10x12 Tacoma yarder and Heisler locomotive. Loading with gypsy drum, gin pole and rollway. Photo taken as crew was preparing to ride flat car home after day's work. Left to right: 1, Ed Woods, yarder engineer; 2, Larson, foreman; 3, John Cook, head brakeman; 4, Bob

Pierce, whistle punk; 5, rigging man; 6, W. Richmyer, locomotive engineer; 7, Carol Bryson, fireman; 8, Riley Jones; 9; 10; 11, Browne Parker, second loader; 12, Cogburn, hook-tender; 13, Bryson, sniper; 14; 15, Chet Whitted, spool tender. Date: about 1916.

*C. Kinsey collection, U. of Washington*





north shore of Clear Lake east toward what is now the Janicki Road. Kennedy and O'Brien sold out to Bratnober-Waite in 1902, and in November of the same year the company began operating under the name Clear Lake Lumber Company. A second new Climax locomotive was purchased at that time. Officers in 1902 were F. H. Jackson, president, and J. E. Bratnober, secretary. This company was to become one of the three large logging railroad operations in the county.

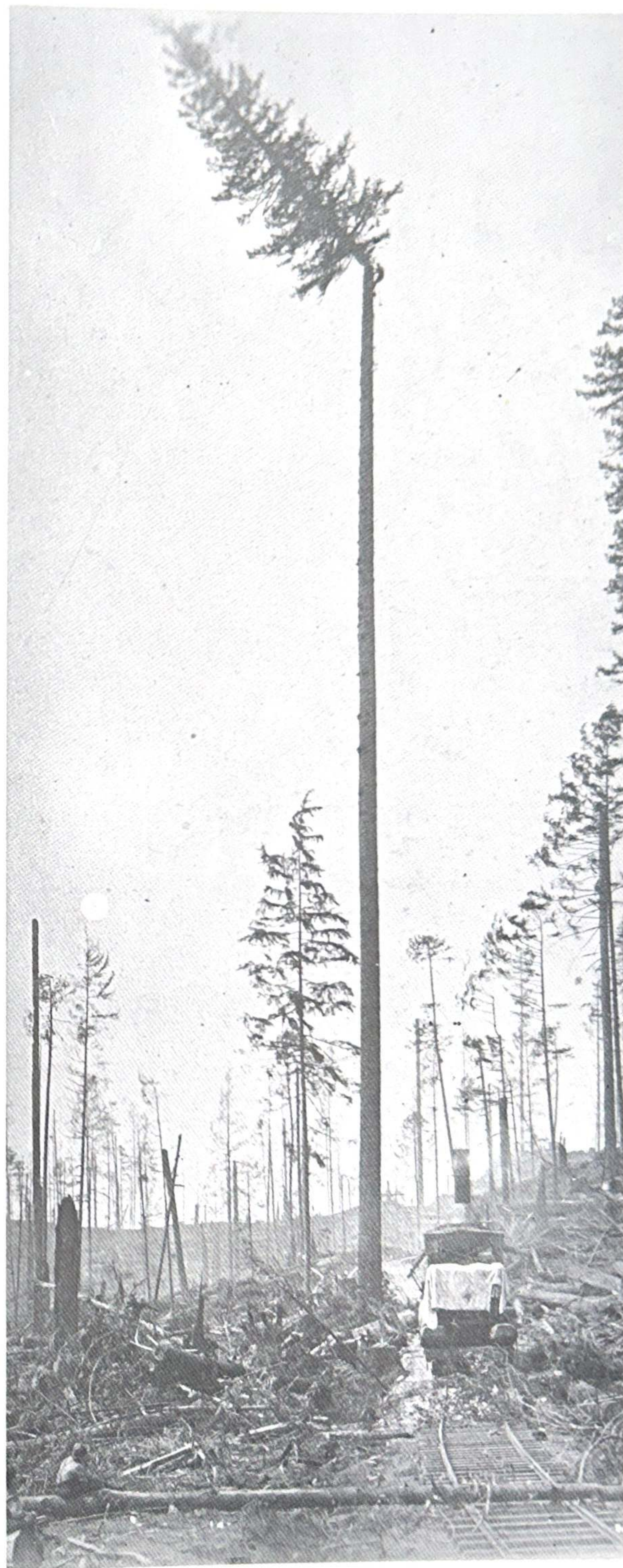
Ed English filed Articles of Incorporation in 1901, for the English Lumber Company located just south of Conway. English pushed steel and ties east to Conway Hill and there built "headquarters," or Camp 1, which was to endure for half a century. In the years to follow the English Lumber Company built some 70 miles of railroad, ultimately extending beyond Lake Cavanaugh.

Third in the trilogy of large operators was the Puget Sound and Baker River Railway, incorporated in 1906, and built from south of Burlington to a point near Hamilton. P.S.&B.R., with its connecting companies, handled a major portion of up-river log shipments and was to be the last logging railroad to operate in Skagit County.

In 1904, Pat McCoy bought a new Shay and built a railroad to haul logs from the west side of Bow Hill to a dump on the Samish River near Edison. Bess Conn Rogers remembers Pat's Shay frightening the farm animals when the train puffed across the flat toward Edison. Pat McCoy sold out in 1910 and moved to another location.

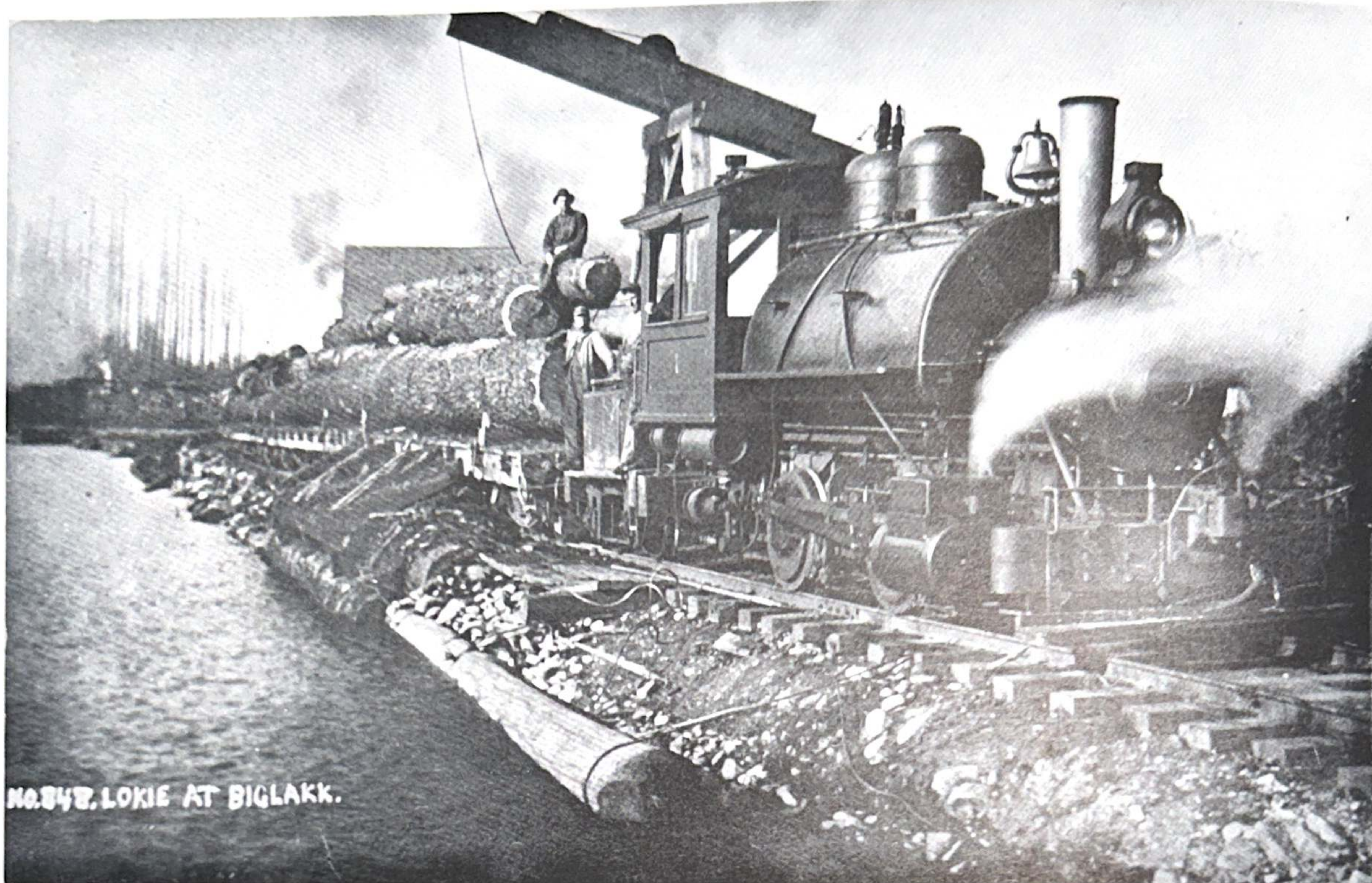
Lake McMurray loggers got into the railroad business around 1905, when L. Houghton Logging Company laid steel to supply logs to the Atlas mill. By 1908, the Timberman Magazine's *Western Railway and Logging Railroad Directory* listed Houghton with 8 miles of track, 2 geared locomotives (Shays), 30 sets of disconnected log cars and 1 flat car.

"Disconnected trucks" were a common type of logging car for early railroads. Each "truck" was a four-wheel carriage fitted with a "bunk" or beam to support logs and a coupler on each end. Two of these were a "set." Going empty to the woods they were all coupled together in a continuous string, having the appearance of a "long line of wheels." When loaded they were separated the length of the logs; the weight of the load in place and an occasional chain kept the "car" together. They had no automatic brakes; a hand brake-wheel on one side controlled the individual brakes.



Topping a spar tree, Sound Logging Company, 1918. By lopping off the branches and cutting the top from a strong, straight living tree loggers could get a support for their overhead cables used for loading logs on rail cars. The size of the tree is shown by the tiny figure of a man just below the falling top.  
Skagit County Historical Museum from Thomas McShane





NO. 47. LOKIE AT BIGLAKK.

THE ONE SPOT. Day Lumber Company's first locomotive; little is known about where she came from. Standing in gangway to cab is the engineer, James A. Barringer; on

rear of tender tank is Pete Osborn and Mr. Layhe sitting on log.

*Josephine Hoffman*

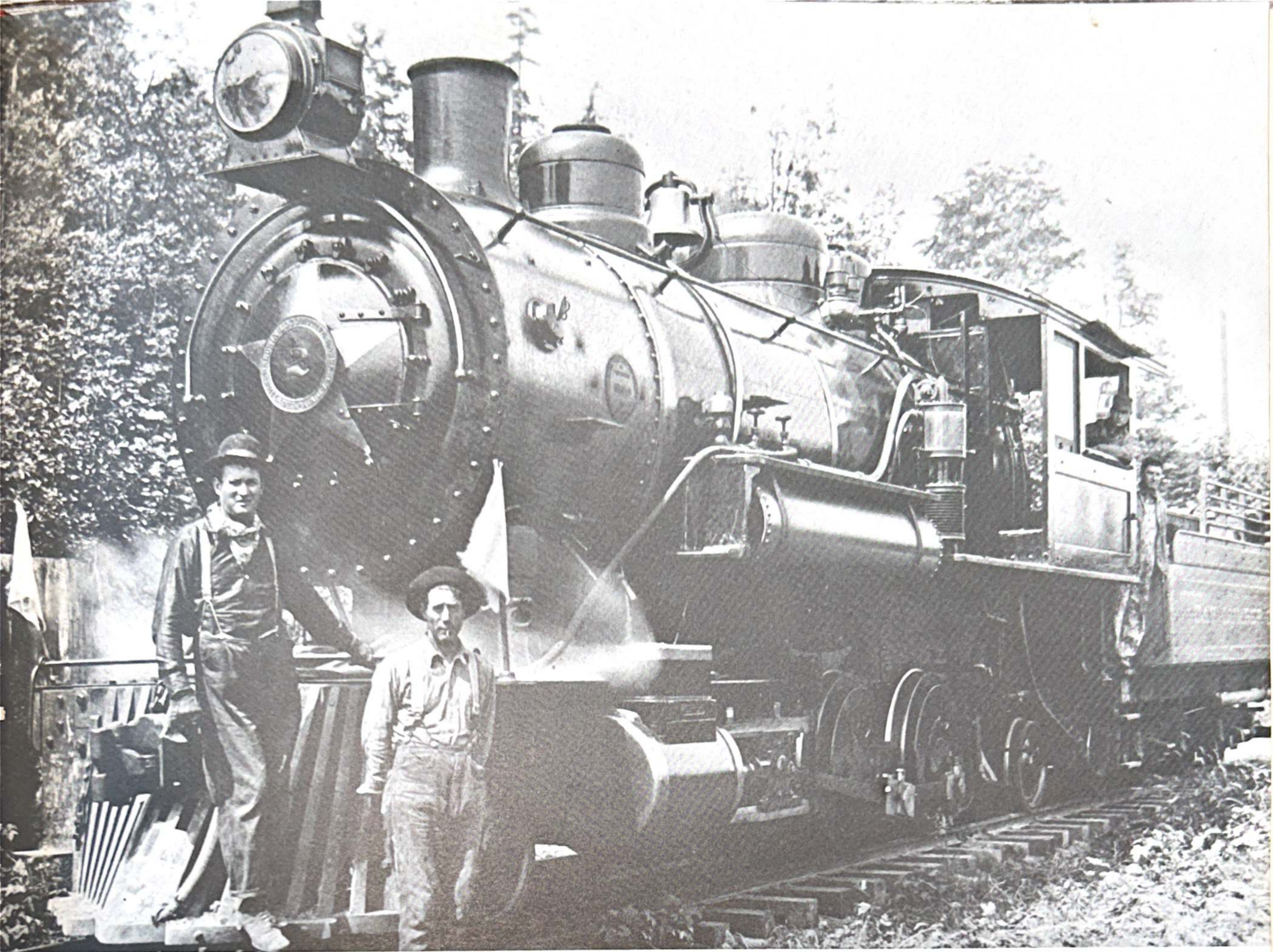
THE TWO SPOT. Standing on the grounds of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, Philadelphia, Pa., Day Lumber Com-

pany No. 2 is fresh from the erecting floor and waiting shipment to Skagit County. The year is 1911.

*Baldwin Builder's photo—H. L. Broadbelt*



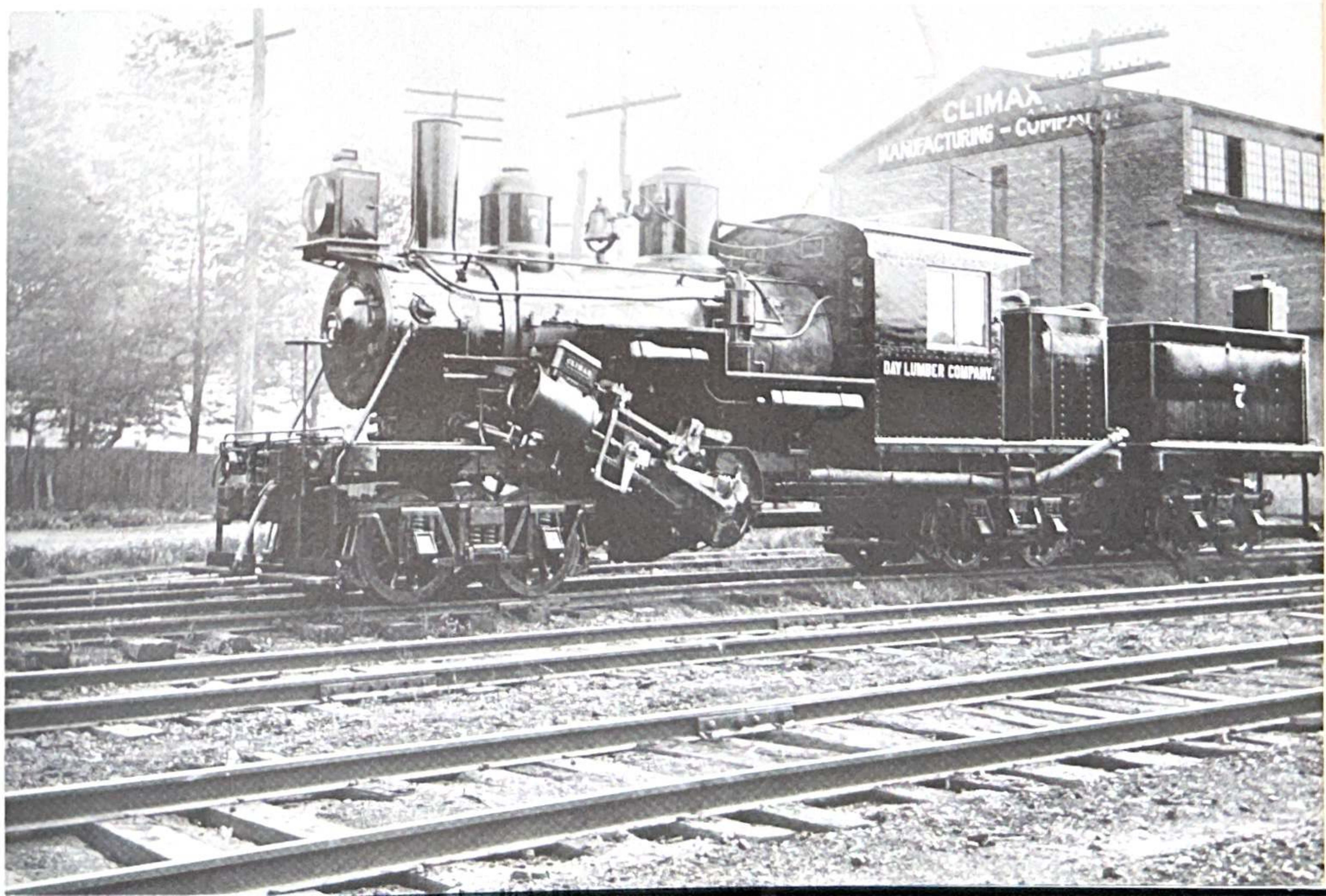




DAY LUMBER'S ONLY ROAD LOCOMOTIVE, the Two-Spot, pauses for the photographer in the area north of Big Lake. She carried 3,500 gallons of water, 1,200 gallons

of fuel oil and weighed 205,000 pounds. James Barringer standing in gangway. She was traded in on a new Shay locomotive in 1913.

*Art Barringer*



The third and last locomotive to be purchased new by Day Lumber Company was this 80-ton Climax. Shown here at the Climax factory, Corry, Pa., in 1916, she was used in the rough country east of Big Lake.  
*Walt Casler*



Before descending a grade, brakemen would run along the slow-moving log train tightening the brake wheels with sticks. Then at the bottom of the grade the brakemen would again run along the train, this time "knocking the brakes loose." To facilitate handling the brakes the railroads tried to keep the trucks so arranged that the brake wheels were all on the same side of the train. Because of accidents and normal switching of cars this was unfortunately much like trying to keep a class of grade-school children walking in a straight line.

In later years most logging companies changed to "connected trucks" or solid-frame skeleton log cars equipped with automatic air brakes.

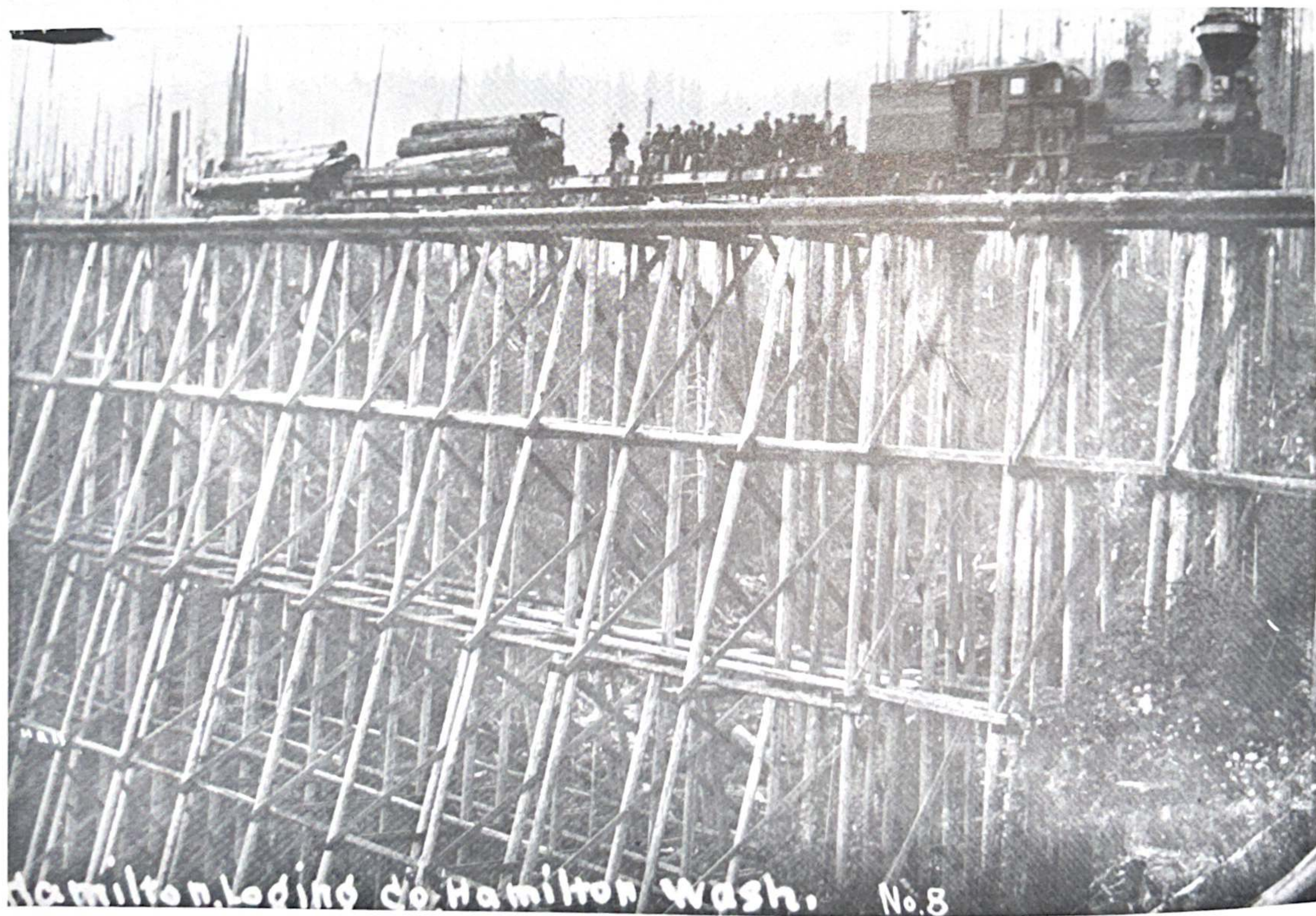
Big Lake joined the railroad ranks by 1906, with the arrival of a four-wheel rod locomotive on the Day Lumber Company property. Incorporated in 1900, Day Lumber made Big Lake a "com-

pany town" until 1926. J. H. Day came from Rhinelander, Wisconsin, and the new firm succeeded the Parker interests who had operated at that location.

The big red barns of the Day Lumber "company farm" still stand today on the Walking-M ranch at Big Lake.

Clear Lake saw a reorganization of the Clear Lake Lumber Company in 1913, when B. R. Lewis, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, merged his Skagit Logging Company with the existing Clear Lake firm. A new subsidiary of the company was the Puget Sound and Cascade Railway, which began building a common carrier railroad east up the south side of the Skagit River and west to Mount Vernon. Much of the present South Skagit Highway as far as Finney Creek is built on this old railroad grade.

The year 1915, found English Lumber Company working out of Camp 5 at Little Mountain



RED CABIN CREEK trestle. Hamilton Logging Company first spanned Red Cabin Creek about 1909. The company relocated their route and built a second trestle just down-

stream from this picture in 1913. (Following page shows construction of this second trestle.)

Skagit County Historical Museum





Highest single pole bridge in world  
Height 132 ft. 6 in.  
Hamilton Logging Co.

Kinsey photo—Stan Dexter



where they logged for six years. Felix Minor was born at Camp 5 where his dad ran locomotive for English.

During the Camp 5 era, English operated one of the more unusual locomotives in the county, a saddle-tank Heisler. Some regular Heislars were used in Skagit County; however, the factory saddle-tank option was rare. The tank was fitted over the boiler and was used to carry water. She was numbered "8" on the English line and it was on her that Phil Minor took a tumble back about 1916. Evidently the train crew suspected that a certain old hemlock bridge was becoming weak with old age because they all got off the train as he approached with the 8-spot. Phil proceeded with caution and sure enough the old hemlock collapsed and dumped him and the 8-spot into the ravine below. Phil got out in good shape and the junk man got the rest. Certainly an undignified demise for an unusual locomotive. And in spite of the acute curiosity of more than one historian, it has never been learned where Ed English purchased such a rare piece of machinery. Perhaps time will yield the answer.

The hemlock bridge or trestle claimed more than one victim in Skagit County. It was often deemed expedient to use hemlock material when building "temporary" track. The feeling was that after 4 or 5 years, when the wood was rotten, the railroad would have moved on to fresh timber. The fact was many trestles were used beyond their allotted years. Several logging railroads had mysterious "trails" near their old trestles. These footpaths led from one end of the trestle through the ravine or other obstruction to the distant end of the structure and were used by train crews when the engineer set the throttle and they all ran to the other end to catch the locomotive when she came by. That was the sure way to get across safely.

As time passed the loggers advanced farther into the timber. They faced difficult terrain and longer hauls. In the late 'teens and early 1920s, a few loggers turned to early truck logging; however, the strong man of the woods still rode rails and more complex machinery was devised to tackle the mountains by railroad. Larger, more powerful locomotives and improved methods were devised. Then necessity spawned an awesome addition to the logging railroad: the incline. To reach high timber loggers built directly up the side of a mountain on grades almost to a 45-degree angle.

Clear Lake Lumber Company operated two inclines. One was near Pressentin Creek and was

5,375 feet in length and climbed 900 feet in that distance. The grade varied from 14 to 35 per cent and required 11,600 feet of 1 3/8 inch cable. At the top of the incline sat a steam "snubbing" engine to raise and lower logging cars up and down the incline by means of the large cable and a special block car. During the average month's work, 3 million board feet of logs were lowered down the incline. A Shay locomotive was kept on the top to switch cars, and locomotive Number 200 from the subsidiary Puget Sound & Cascade Railway was used for the mainline haul to the Clear Lake mill.

Other users of the incline in Skagit County were Lyman Timber Company, McNeil and O'Hearne, Samish Bay Logging Company and Dempsey Lumber Company.

Logging railroad activity in Skagit County reached its peak in the 1920s. More railroads were in operation at that time than could ever be mentioned here. The locomotive was the heart of the logging railroad, and the locomotive crew maintained a different life and schedule from the other employees.

The men who worked in the brush often went to town for the weekend. Railroad crews were not always that free on week-ends. Following Friday's last run to camp with the locomotive, Saturday and Sunday were the only idle days for the engine. It was then that minor repairs and maintenance were usually accomplished. If not doing the work himself, the engineer was often keeping an eye on his "baby."

The work week began early for the engineer and fireman. Monday's pre-dawn hours found one or both of them with a fire in the locomotive, getting up steam for the day. "Firing up" a cold engine could take 4 to 8 hours depending upon circumstances; however, once hot the locomotive would stay warm overnight and, depending on how many leaks she had, retain some steam for the next day. This made it much easier the remainder of the week to prepare the engine for work.

Early locomotives were fired with wood, soon coal began to be used and by the 1920s, oil was becoming the most popular. Oil fuel put less strain on the back as it did not have to be thrown or shoveled, but it presented its own peculiarities: the stuff was thick, heavy and refused to flow at low temperatures. When the oil did flow it had to be blasted into the firebox in an "atomized" spray; this was to break up the fuel into droplets which allowed better ignition.





THE DEMPSEY INCLINE. In the early 1920s, Dempsey Lumber Company operated this incline northeast of Hamilton. Three loaded cars were lowered down the mountain

on each operation. A snubbing engine on top handled the cable and a Heisler locomotive switched cars above the incline.  
*Kinsey photo, Al Hodgins*





Logging "decline" opposite of the railroad incline, in this view of Lyman Timber Company, loaded cars are pulled

up the hill by cable. This decline was operated on "Spud Hill" north of Hamilton. *Skagit County Historical Museum*

When the engineer started the locomotive moving, the fireman had to increase oil flow to the fire with a corresponding movement, otherwise the sudden increase in draft could "suck" the fire out of the firebox. An insufficient increase in oil flow caused yellowish smoke to issue from the stack indicating a cold fire or a fire about to extinguish. Too great an increase in oil flow caused great clouds of black smoke to roll from the stack as evidence of excessive oil.

When the locomotive was not moving the fireman maintained a low fire because too much heat would gradually build steam which eventually "popped" the safety valve; this was a waste of fuel and steam. A fire too low would burn poorly and cause burning oil to drip onto the track below the firebox. Thus it was necessary for the fireman to maintain a constant balance of oil flow, atomizer, and draft to hold a proper fire.

Major decisions in the operation of the train fell on the engineer whose hands controlled the throttle and brake. When and how to start and stop made the difference between good operation and disaster. Early logging locomotives had only

"engine" brakes and depended on assistance from hand brakes on the logging cars. The hand brakes were not efficient and the engine brakes were tricky to use. Too light an application of engine brakes failed to do any good and too heavy an application simply locked and slid the wheels.

Automatic air brakes on all wheels of the train soon improved the operation and safety of the logging railroad.

Engineer and fireman were constantly working in unison, watching track, signals, their train, cab controls and gauges; teamwork was the key to running a locomotive. It was not operating a machine . . . it was learning to live as part of something that had a life and a way of its own.

Except in the far Upper Skagit Valley, almost every part of the county once heard the song of the logging locomotive. Sometimes dangerous — always requiring hard and dirty work — yet, nothing could equal a ride on the locomotive through the forest aisles at night, the red glow of the firebox reflecting beneath 80 tons of iron and steam. The cry of the whistle echoing from the hillsides still lingers in the hearts of many.





9964. English Camp 7. The mulligan car which carried supplies and

crew from job to job along the railroad. The field between buildings was used for baseball and recreation. The road to Lake Cavanaugh now runs through this spot and the old railroad grade is a truck road.

Kinsey photo, Pete Brandt

*Shiloh  
the English  
Road just west of  
School a  
short cut*



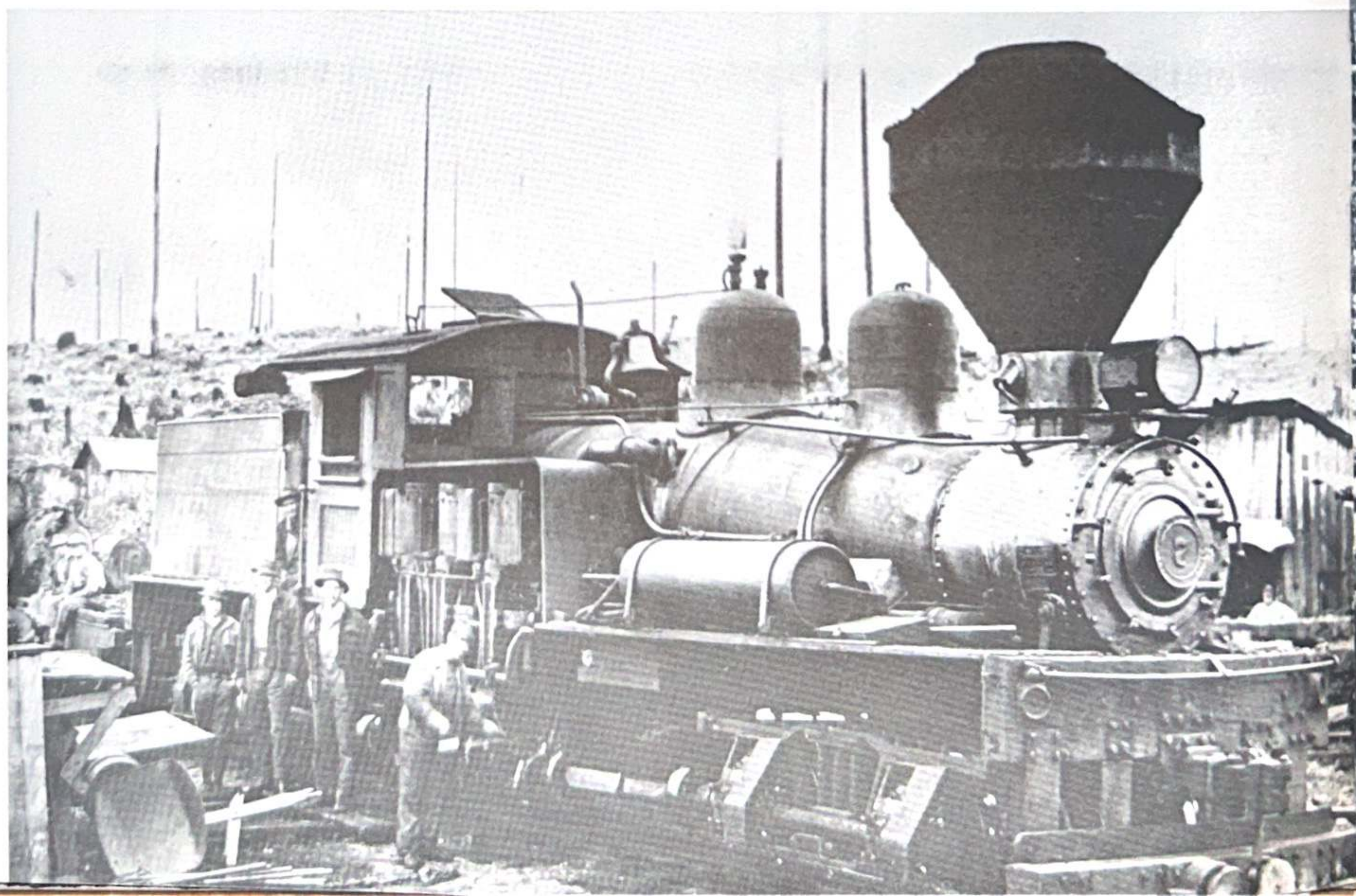


BUTLER LUMBER COMPANY. Loading logs in 1915. The scale of the operation can be understood if the viewer will locate the men on the loaded car and the one standing

below and to the left of the swinging log. Locomotive is 28-ton Heisler.

*Kinsey photo, Fred Butler*

ENGLISH LUMBER CO. Shay No. 7. Ed Wilton in foreground with oil can. "Bumpers" below couplers are for pushing logs along railroad track. *Kinsey photo, Madge Ewing*







LYMAN TIMBER COMPANY M.A.C. Gas Rail Car. Built by Skagit Steel and Iron Works, these M.A.C. "Speeders" introduced the internal combustion engine to the woods.

They were used to carry supplies, move men and do general chores around the logging camps.

*Skagit Corporation*

FOUR GARFORD TRUCKS ABOUT 1917. Truck logging was no threat to the railroad at this time, however, it was

a sign of things to come.

*Kinsey photo, Charles Dwelley*





## Chapter III

# WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SKAGIT CITY?

Skagit City, Sterling, Milltown, Ehrlich — what happened to them? Where were Harmony and Utopia?

The obituaries of old timers in the newspapers give birthplaces which cannot be found on any modern map of Skagit County. The papers of the early years of the century are full of social notes from such places as Olympia Marsh, Moss Hill, Prairie, Van Horn, Ridgeway, Padilla. Today old residents confuse newcomers and others not so new by talking familiarly about Fredonia, Rexville, Beaver Marsh, and other places which have no visible existence.

This chapter is an attempt to compile a lexicon of place names which appear in the history of the county, to locate them, and to tell what happened to them and why. For clarity it will be necessary to begin at the beginning and to bring each up to the present instead of trying to confine it within the 1890 to 1920 period. The names are grouped into six categories and listed alphabetically in each: 1) Areas which once had a special character, no longer visible 2) The towns which

were never more than the dreams of promoters 3) Rural areas which were communities but never became towns 4) Towns which gave real promise or flourished for a time and then vanished 5) Towns which had a time of some prosperity and activity but later relapsed into peaceful villages whose present state gives little hint of their once flourishing condition 6) The towns which have continued to grow.

Before beginning with the place names a rapid sketch of the influences which were bringing change will help in understanding specifics. The first business houses and the settlements accompanying them were located on waterways and were dependent on them. Railroads altered the patterns, creating new towns, increasing the prosperity of some old ones, taking the traffic from others, creating a fever of speculation among people who wished to turn farm or stump land into city lots. As roads and bridges were built the improved land routes influenced the direction of trade; as stands of virgin timber in an area were exhausted the activities which revolved around logging and milling moved elsewhere.



Utsaladdy on Camano Island in 1906. Until about 1900 families living in the lower Skagit delta along the South Fork found it easier to get their supplies by rowing down the sloughs and across the bay to Utsaladdy rather than bucking the current of the river to go upstream to Fir or Skagit City. After a passable road was built to Fir and Conway boat travel was no longer necessary for ordinary shopping.

*Picture from Ronald Holttum collection.*



## 1. AREAS WITH SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS

### BEAVER MARSH

When the first settlers arrived a large swampy area, covered chiefly with brush instead of trees, lay east of Pleasant Ridge on both sides of what is now Bradshaw Road and as far east as the present Beaver Marsh Road. Tule shoes were often used on oxen and horses in the mushy ground and the wettest places in the roads were made passable with cedar puncheons. Drainage has made it some of the finest land in the valley.

### CEDARDALE

The area south of Mount Vernon between the high ground on the east and the South Fork on the west is all part of Cedardale, while the hill is Cedarcrest, though that name is seldom used. Early settlers in the area were Ole N. Lee and Peter Egtvet from Norway, Charles Villeneuve from French Ontario, and Thomas F. Jones. The land is rich but low lying with water draining down through it from the hills. It took many years of hard work to clear and drain it and to build dikes to protect it from river floods. Conway and Milltown were the trading centers on the left bank of the river and the older towns of Fir and Skagit City on the island could be reached by ferry. A great many Norwegians settled in Cedardale. (See Ch. VII.)

### DODGE VALLEY

Most of the flat area between Pleasant Ridge on the east, the high banks of the North Fork on the south, and Sullivan slough near LaConner on the west is Dodge Valley. The tide flats first reclaimed by Calhoun and Sullivan were in this area. The porch of the Skagit County Historical Museum gives a splendid view across this rich land to the southeast.

### OLYMPIA MARSH

The land lying northwest of Burlington at the foot of Bay View Ridge is Olympia Marsh, extremely rich peat soil which was hard to bring under cultivation because it was so difficult to drain. Before tiles were available for this purpose the Knutzens dug deep ditches, covered the tops with cedar puncheons, and then graded soil over the puncheons; the covered ditches ran into Joe Leary slough which skirts the north end of the ridge and is the natural outlet for the area. There were some occasions when the peat soil of Olympia Marsh caught fire and burned for months.

### RIVERSIDE

The Skagit River flows almost directly west

along the north edge of Riverside where the highway and railroad bridges cross it, bends south at Avon, and then flows east to Mount Vernon where it bends again south and southwest. The whole area from the Burlington-Northern tracks west, an area with the river on three sides, is Riverside; the ground is highest along the river bank and lowest in the center. For many years the children from the western edge rowed across the river daily to attend the Avon school. The farmers of Riverside resisted the idea of dikes for a long time after the rest of the river was lined with them, preferring to deal with occasional inundations rather than pay certain taxes for dubious protection. Dikes were finally built after the great flood of 1909. Old timers have many doubts about the flood safety of the businesses now proliferating at Riverside, even though they are built on several feet of fill.

### THE PRAIRIES

When the first settlers arrived they found most of the good agricultural land occupied by giant trees, smaller trees, and brush so thick that an enormous amount of work was required before any crops could be planted. The only clear ground was on the prairies. Various theories are offered to explain why certain areas of fertile ground were treeless when the forest surrounded them but no theory is universally accepted. The fact remains that there were scattered about the county open spaces, covered with berry bushes, ferns, camas, and other roots which furnished the only starches in the Indian diet. White settlers who could homestead these areas found farm land almost ready for crops. They could and did extend the area of cultivated land in all directions as forests were cut and land cleared. Today the edges of the former prairies are not distinguishable, though the general location of the more famous ones is known and the names linger.

### JARMAN PRAIRIE

This lies one mile east of old Highway 99 up the Prairie Road. Blanket Bill Jarman lived here for many years with his faithful Indian wife, Alice. The name is often corrupted to "German Prairie," a sad loss of our chief memorial to our earliest and most picturesque white settler.

### SAUK PRAIRIE

This prairie was on a low bench in the valley of the Sauk River which enters the Skagit from the south nearly opposite the old towns of Sauk and Rockport. Sauk Prairie was the scene of a famous multiple murder and suicide in 1911. The inexplicable angles of the Sauk Prairie Massacre



still fascinate anyone who examines the details.  
**WARNER PRAIRIE**

"Cap" Warner always maintained that he spotted the prairie where he made his home and to which he gave his name when he was on top of Mount Baker, looking back across the forests. At that time it was deep in the wilderness four or five miles farther up the Samish Valley than Jarman Prairie. In 1886 there was a post office at Prairie to which the mail was brought the 14 miles from Edison once a week. Both mail and schools are now within the Sedro Woolley district. Nothing is left to mark the Warner home except four old hickory trees.

## 2. TOWNS THAT NEVER WERE

Dozens of early settlers dreamed of making a profit by turning farm or stump land into town lots which could be sold for businesses or residences. Sometimes the dream came true but often the soap bubble burst as it did in the samples below.

### ATLANTA

In 1883 George Washington Lafayette Allen built a hotel on Samish Island, the Atlanta Home, and platted the town of Atlanta to be "a sanctuary for persecuted Confederates and other sympathizers with the lost cause." It was only separated by a street from a rival town, Samish, laid out by George Dean six days later. Neither developed into a town, though Samish Island docks continued to be a stop for steamers and a commercial and shipping center for the Samish River country until after 1900.

### SCHOONER LARK

H. P. HALL, MASTER,  
 Making Trips On Tide To And From  
 FAIRHAVEN ON TUESDAYS AND SATURDAY.  
 CARRYING PASSENGERS AND FREIGHT.  
 EDISON. WASH.

### TO THE PUBLIC.

AT SOLICITATION OF FRIENDS, I HAVE CONCLUDED TO PLACE ON THE  
 MARKET MY PLATTED PROPERTY, SITUATED AT

### MONTANA

AT THE JUNCTION OF THE  
 FAIRHAVEN & SOUTHERN  
 AND  
 SEATTLE & MONTANA RAILROADS  
 ON LINE OF THE

### GREAT NORTHERN RY.

SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON.  
 Business Lots are 40x100 feet and will be sold from \$25 to \$50 each.  
 Residence Lots are 60x120 feet well located, and will be sold at \$50 each.

### TERMS

Full payment at time of purchase, or in instalments as follows:  
 One-third down at time of purchase, one third in one year and one third in two years, with interest.

A WARRANTY DEED WILL BE GIVEN  
 when all payments have been made.

For further particulars and view of plat, apply to H. STUART, at Junction.  
 READ THE LIST AND SEE IT GROW.

PATRICK MCCOY  
 EDISON. WASH.

Advertisement from the  
 Puget Sound Phonograph, an Edison newspaper, of Dec. 29, 1892.  
 The schooner Lark actually operated as advertised, but the town of Montana never materialized.

Original from  
 Leta Richardson Steen

The 1883 plat of Rexville beside the North Fork of the Skagit River. The lots never sold and the town never developed, though later a Grange hall, a school, and a creamery were located here.

Original from  
 Al Summers

### BESSEMER

With the development of the Bennett coal mines at Cokedale six miles from Sedro Woolley, Harrison Clothier laid out a town on the bank of the Skagit closest to the mines and called it Bessemer, apparently dreaming of it as a center for steel making. Nothing happened there, however.  
**CUMBERLAND**

The HISTORY mentions Cumberland as one of the plats filed in 1890 during the railway boom but tells nothing more of it than the name.

### EAGLE HARBOR

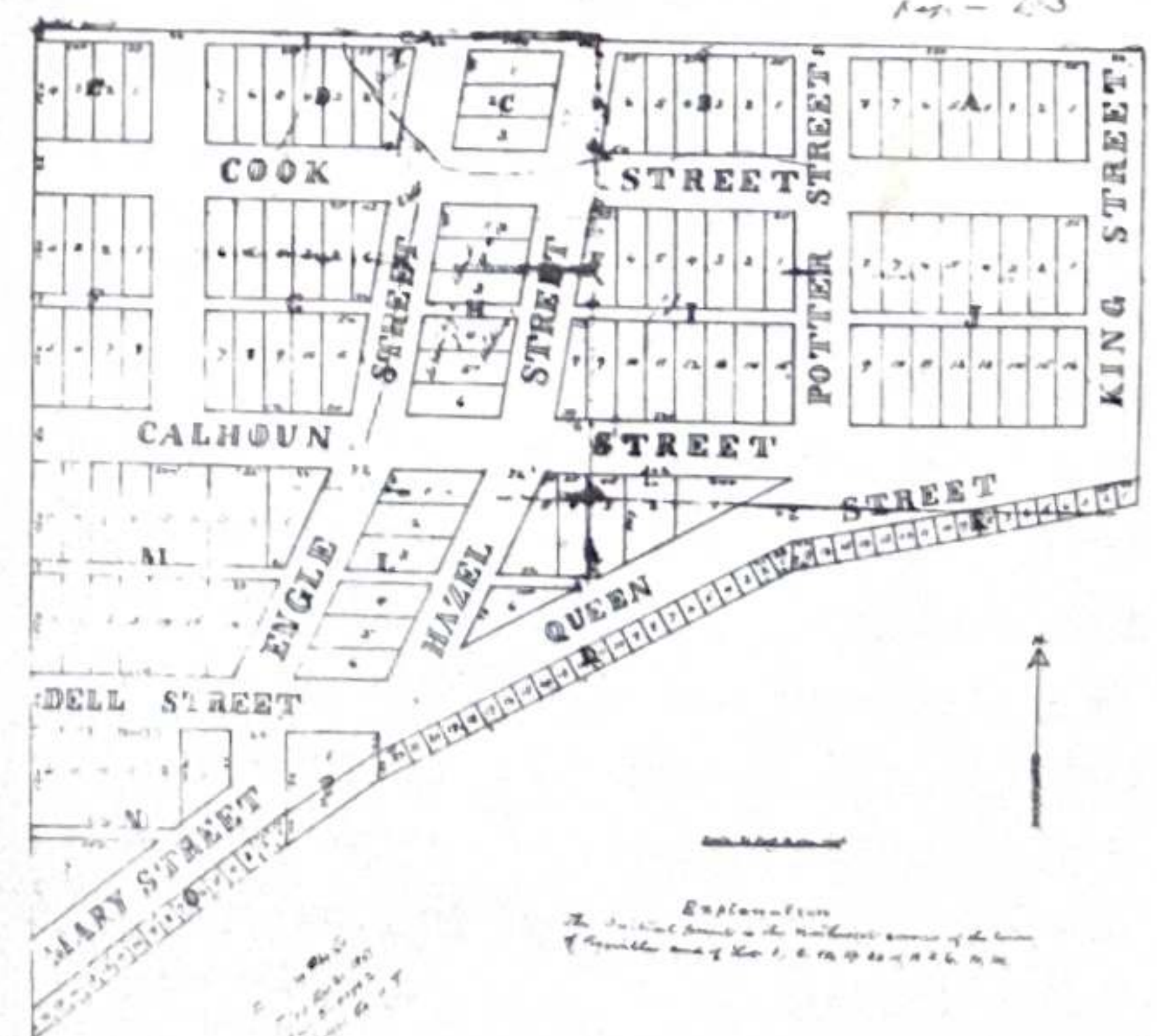
The town of Eagle Harbor on Cypress Island was platted in 1881 but never developed beyond a general store.

### FIDALGO

William Munks settled on March's Point in the 1860s near the middle of the west shore. He had a dock at which steamers called regularly and a store widely patronized by customers who came by boat, on foot, or on horseback. The place was known as Fidalgo and had a post office. In the railway boom of 1890 a station was located there and Munks built a fine hotel and platted a town. The collapse of the boom kept the hotel from opening and the town lots from selling. Fidalgo had a fine school building, however, and so much local pride that it resisted incorporation into the Anacortes school district for a great many years.  
**GIBRALTAR**

A scenic location at the south end of Fidalgo Island a short distance northeast of Dewey was to have become the town of Gibraltar. While it never

### REXVILLE





developed into a town it kept its name and is now a beautiful residential area.

#### LADYSMITH

The town of Ladysmith was platted by Mr. and Mrs. O. P. Smith who owned the farm. The town lots did not sell but when the interurban built through the area in 1912 it located the station for Bow and Edison halfway between the two and on the Ladysmith site. It was first proposed to call the interurban stop Ladysmith but when the neighbors objected it became Edison.

#### MERIDIAN

When the Seattle Lakeshore and Eastern Railway was building around Lake McMurray some developers tried to start a rival town to McMurray which had been founded in anticipation of the rail line. Meridian was advertised in extravagant terms but the promotion failed.

#### MONTANA

Patrick McCoy of Edison promoted his dream city through an advertisement in the Puget Sound Phonograph of Edison, reproduced here. The advertisement tells all that is known about the venture.

#### REXVILLE

The south end of Pleasant Ridge is high ground above the North Fork of the Skagit and in 1883 it seemed to a promoter like a good place for a town. Rexville later became a rural center, described below, but it was not destined to become a town.

### 3. RURAL SETTLEMENTS WHICH NEVER BECAME TOWNS

#### CLAYTON BAY

This was an interurban stop north of Blanchard at the foot of the Chuckanuts. There had been an early day trading post there.

#### DAY CREEK

The stream called Day Creek flows into the Skagit River from the south almost directly opposite Lyman. A settlement existed there before 1900 when there were still no roads on the south bank of the river; a ferry gave access to the north bank which had both a road and a railroad. There was a great deal of logging in the area, most of it by the huge Clear Lake Lumber Company. The community had a mill, a school, and a church. When logging ceased some of the land was cleared for agriculture while some is now in second growth timber. Though the public school is now gone, absorbed into the Sedro Woolley system, a group of parents maintain their own private Day Creek School, doing much of the teaching themselves. The Day Creek community annually plays host to the public at a big beef barbecue in their community hall.

#### EQUALITY COLONY

The Socialist colony on Bow Hill near Blanchard at one time had more than 200 residents who operated a mill as well as a fishing boat, tilled more than 100 acres of land, published a newspaper, and maintained a school for their children. The commune was dissolved in 1906 and the property sold at auction on the court house steps in Mount Vernon. Colony Road and Colony Creek are the only reminders today of the spot where it once stood.

#### FIELD

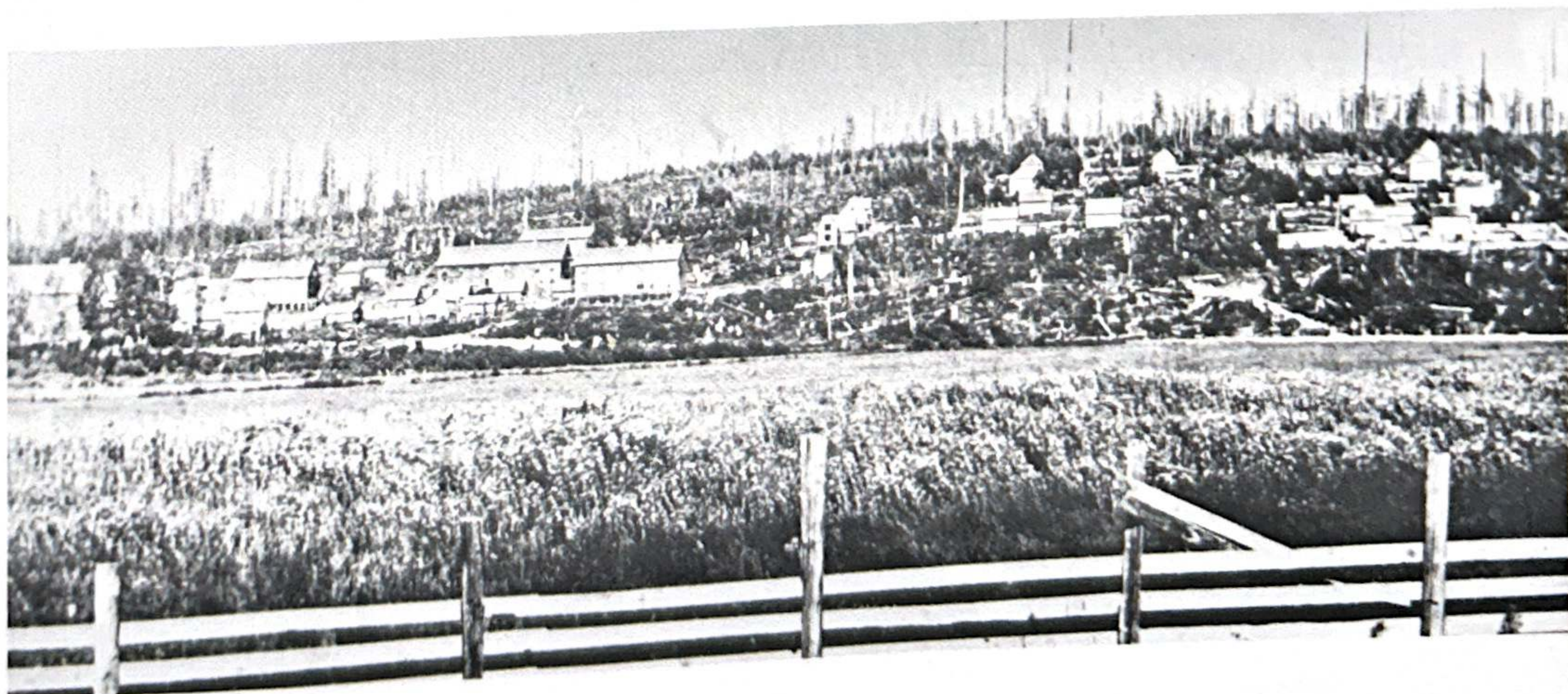
Field was a stop on the interurban north of Allen.

#### FISHTOWN

A group of fishermen built their houses on the north bank of the North Fork near its mouth, anchored their boats in the river, and made their

Equality Colony from the Great Northern Railway which built its cut-off near the foot of Bow Hill in 1903. The hill land has been logged off and the agricultural bottom land cleared and brought under cultivation.

*From the collection of  
Charles Easton*





living fishing nearby waters. There are still houses and fishermen there today, but the name is more familiar than it once was because archeologists have discovered that Fishtown was formerly the site of an Indian village, occupied over a long period. Their excavations have discovered many artifacts.

#### FRANKLIN

Franklin was a settlement on the hill east of Milltown.

#### FREDONIA

There is a rich agricultural district around the south end of Bay View Ridge, roughly between Padilla and Olympia Marsh, which was known as Fredonia and still retains the name though nothing presently marks its location. It was a station-stop on the Burlington-Anacortes rail line and it had a school and still has an active Grange. Records exist of an 1890 community Christmas party financed by pledges of \$27 by 26 people and one woman who promised candy. The Grange was chartered on December 13, 1913, and held its first meeting in the Ridgeway Baptist Church. The following were original officers and charter members: T. J. Brennon, Master; Agnes Biever, Overseer; Cora Brennon, Lecturer; Albert Callahan, Steward; Emery Banks, Assistant Steward; Fred Johnson, Chaplain; Ed Callahan, Treasurer; Margaret Callahan, Secretary; Bert L. Heggen, Gatekeeper; Mary Biever, Ceres; Anna Callahan, Pomona; Mrs. John Callahan, Flora. Charter members: John Callahan, Bryan Caling, Mary McFarlane, John Gervais, Ruby Woodburn, Harold McFarlane, Anna O. Callahan, Thomas Biever, Hazel Jenne, Mrs. John Gervais, Lee Elwood.

#### HARMONY

The Harmony district is a rural area on the Skagit delta west of Mount Vernon, centering at the intersection of the Kamb and Calhoun Roads, though when it began the Kamb Road was only a trail through the woods. Harmony never tried to become a town but it had a school from the 1890s and a new two-room building in 1908 which had a second floor room for an auditorium. At that time the old school building became the Grange hall. The County Poor Farm was on the edge of the Harmony district next to the dike; in 1915 one wing of it was set aside for a tuberculosis sanitarium. The numerous Swedish farmers in the Harmony neighborhood built a Swedish Baptist Church around 1900 and in 1910 Mr. Wolf erected a small building for an English language

Methodist Sunday School. People from Harmony did their shopping in Mount Vernon, traveling along the dike until the roads through the flats were graveled around 1910.

#### HICKSON

Midway between Jarman and Warner Prairies lies the Hickson community. It really began in 1904 when George Hickson bought 160 acres of logged off land, planning to pay for it by cutting shingle bolts from the stumps which studded it. He built his home and others followed him. Men not only cut shingle bolts on their own land, they also worked in the nearby logging camps and mills, and trapped, hunted, and fished in their spare time. By 1910 they had a small school, replaced by a substantial new one in 1915-16. The Hickson family was famous for its hospitality and a dance hall on the place became the most popular resort in the area. In the 1940s the Hickson Community Club and the Hickson Gun Club were organized. Hickson never tried to be a town but it was always a community.

#### HOOGDAL

The story of the Swedish community of Hoogdal is told more fully below in Chapter VII. At the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909 this group of hardy homeseekers learned of the opportunities offered by the logged off lands of Skagit County. They bought a great and remote tract north of Sedro Woolley and carved homes out of the wilderness, transforming the shambles left by the loggers into a place of comfortable homes, well tended fields, and healthy country life.

#### MANSFORD

This was a small settlement on the edge of Sauk Prairie. At one time it was a typical rural community but while other areas have become more congested its population has remained scattered, so scattered that elections are conducted with absentee ballots instead of bringing citizens to a central polling place.

#### MINERAL PARK

At a point on the Cascade River where the North and South Forks join and where the trails from the mines converged there was once a road-house for the refreshment and entertainment of miners called Mineral Park. When mining and prospecting declined and practically disappeared Mineral Park vanished. Nothing remains to show where it once was.

#### MINKLER

At one time the settlement of Minkler at the



south end of Minkler Lake had a mill, a store, a post office, and a school and was a stop on the east-west line of the Great Northern Railway. It never grew to be a town and has now disappeared.

**MOODY**

A mile from Belfast was Moody, a station on the railroad. The post office moved there from Belfast in 1901 but remained only briefly. The building of the Great Northern cut-off at the foot of the Chuckanuts left it without passenger service and the postal service was transferred to Bow.

**MOSS HILL**

The community of Moss Hill was located on the road to the upper Skagit between Birdsvew and Concrete. It had a school near the Skagit River. There is nothing there today to mark the spot.

**ORIENT**

A group of incoming settlers following the Sauk River on foot over a rough trail stopped to rest and an exhausted woman exclaimed, "I can't go any farther! This must be China!" When the newcomers later applied for a post office they wanted to call the place "China" but the Postal Department changed the name to "Orient." It had a store and a post office but was never more than a stopping place on the road.

**PADILLA**

The land which was diked by E. A. Sisson, A. G. Tillinghast, and Rienzi Whitney lay to the north of the present tracks of the Burlington-Anacortes rail line and between the LaConnor Edison Road and Padilla Bay. The post office was at the farm landing on Indian slough. When the rail line was built Whitney Station was the nearest point to Padilla so what was left of Padilla moved to Whitney. The Tillinghast Seed Company had been transferred to LaConner a few years earlier.

**PLEASANT RIDGE**

Many of the families who farmed Beaver Marsh and Dodge Valley built their homes on Pleasant Ridge on well drained sites commanding magnificent views. The cemetery near the north end of the Ridge is one of the oldest in the county. There were both Swedish Lutheran and Swedish Methodist churches on the Ridge. Families did their shopping in LaConner and the children attended Rexville school.

**PRAIRIE**

This was a small community near the Whatcom County line established as the post office for the Warner Prairie area. The White Shingle Mill

was at Prairie. Children went up the Samish River a mile or two to school.

**REXVILLE**

Where the south end of Pleasant Ridge touches the North Fork of the Skagit was Rexville, platted as a town in 1883 but never settled as one. It had a school, a creamery, a Grange which is still active, and a county rock quarry which nibbled away at the ledges which make up the foundations and the outcroppings of the ridge. Only the Grange hall remains at Rexville.

**RIDGEWAY**

The Skagit delta was generally swampy before the white men began altering the landscape; roads and trails took advantage of any elevation which promised drainage. The ground on the McLean Road where Bradshaw Road crosses it was a little higher than that around it so it became Ridgeway. There was a school, a Grange, a Baptist church, and a Sunday school, all of which have now vanished.

**SKIYOU**

Skiyou was located about three miles east of Sedro Woolley. It had a school for many years until it was absorbed by the Sedro Woolley district.

**SUNSET**

Sunset was a stop on the interurban between Allen and Edison, the first station beyond Field.

**THORNWOOD**

This was a station on the old Northern Pacific line five miles north of Sedro Woolley. At one time it had a mill and a post office. Thornwood maintained a country school for many years before it was absorbed by Sedro Woolley.

**UTOPIA**

Utopia was a district just west of Lyman between Minkler Lake and the Skagit River. The Utopia school was a community center for a large area surrounding it until it was absorbed by the Sedro Woolley district.

**4. TOWNS THAT HAD THEIR DAY  
AND NOW HAVE VANISHED**

**BAKER**

Now part of Concrete. See Concrete below.

**BANCROFT**

Reverend E. O. Tade built the Alden Academy between 1877 and 1879 on grounds now within the city of Anacortes but then a wilderness. For a period of five years according to some sources, ten according to others, he operated a co-educational Christian academy, open to pupils of all races and drawing its students from a wide area. He platted



the temperance town of Bancroft around the school. "O. E. Tade's first addition" was one of the areas incorporated into Anacortes in 1890. This ended Bancroft and the academy went out of business either before that or soon after when the Anacortes boom collapsed.

#### BELFAST

Before the Great Northern Railway came through in 1891 Gilkey and Parker were logging in the Belfast area, operating a sawmill, and driving the logs they did not saw down the Samish River to salt water — the Fairhaven and Southern rail line had missed Belfast by less than a mile but the Great Northern put it on the map. Two Callahan brothers and a man named Green soon built a shingle mill a mile away on the Samish River but the depression of 1893 caused it financial difficulties. In the mid-nineties it was bought by the Moody family who sold to Bloedel-Donovan in 1906. At first the mail was distributed from Samish, but as the railroad town grew the mail for a large area came to Belfast where it was sorted and carried by stage to Bow, Edison, Equality Colony, and Blanchard. Belfast had all the other comforts and conveniences of a thriving town, school, hotel, stores, and saloons.

In 1902 the Great Northern built its cut-off to Bellingham, skirting the foot of the Chuckanut Mountains and leaving Belfast as a station on a line which led into the woods, ending at Lake Samish. Passenger service was discontinued soon after and the post office was moved to Moody. For many years great trains loaded with logs rolled through Belfast but its days as a town were numbered. Bloedel-Donovan finished logging at Camp

6 about 1912 and the tracks were removed some time between 1917 and 1920. Almost nothing remains today to show where Belfast once flourished. Farming has taken the place of logging and milling.

#### BELLEVILLE

Belleville was a town at the east edge of the Samish flats between Burlington and Belfast on the Great Northern Railway. The town was named for Sam Bell who gave the land for the railway right of way on condition that a station be built on his land and named for him. At the height of local logging Belleville had a school, three saloons, and a mill as well as a good depot. Burlington at the crossing of the east-west and north-south lines of the Great Northern was complaining about the inadequacy of its station. One night without warning or fanfare the Great Northern loaded the Belleville depot on a flat car and by morning had it on its foundations in Burlington. By that time the trees around Belleville were about gone and the community soon followed them into memory.

#### BIRDSVIEW

This stopping place of the river steamers on the north bank of the Skagit River above Hamilton was originally known as Minkler's Landing. The post office became Birdsvew from Mr. Minkler's first name, Birdsey. It never developed beyond a landing with a mill, a hotel, a store, a saloon, and a school. As the railroad took more of the river freight business the importance of the landing declined. Nothing remains now but a small store on the highway.

#### COKEDALE

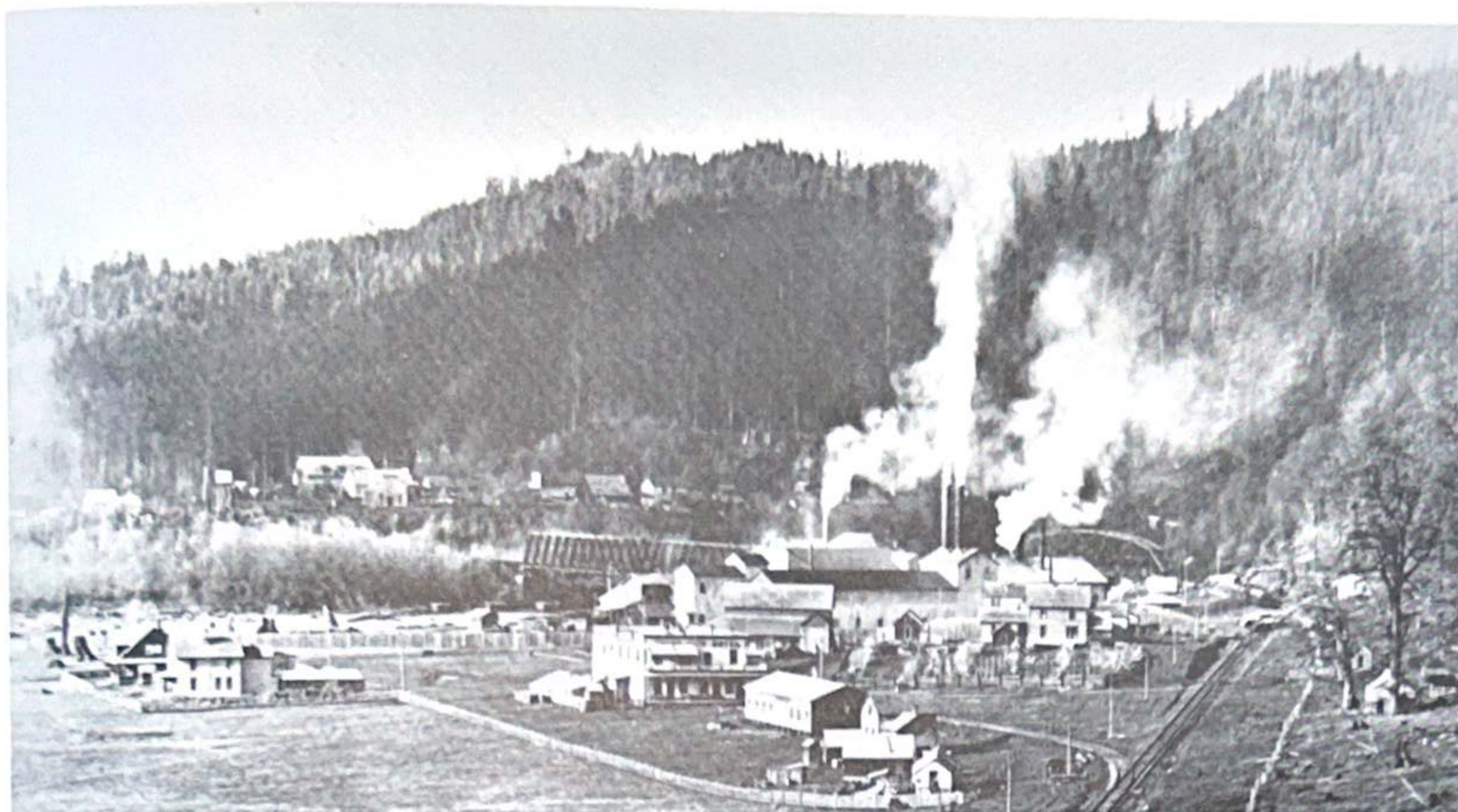
The Bennett coal mines about six miles north-



The settlement of Baker about 1907, when the cement plant of Superior Portland Cement, Inc. was under construction. In 1909 the communities of Cement City and Baker were incorporated to form the town of Concrete.

A Darius Kinsey photograph.  
From the collection of Charles Dwelley





Cement City, on the east bank of the Baker River, was platted as a community for workers at the Washington Cement Co. plant. This 1906 photo, reproduced from a postcard, shows the earlier town of Baker across the river.

*From the collection of Charles Dwelley*



Amasa "Peg-leg" Everett in his old age. (Born in 1849 he lived till 1938.) In 1874 he discovered the coal mines at Hamilton when on a prospecting trip from La Conner to the upper Skagit, a trip in which he had the accident which cost him his leg. In 1875 he built a cabin and homesteaded where the Baker River enters the Skagit and was intimately associated with the history of Concrete and the upper Skagit for the next 35 years. He moved his family to Colby in 1910 and lived there till his death.

*Picture from Leonard Everett*

east of Sedro Woolley were operated off and on from 1891 to 1922, most of the coal being made into coke in the 50 coke ovens on the site. Cokedale, the town which housed the workers, was unique in Skagit County for its dreary ugliness and its disappearance leaves no mourners.

#### CEMENT CITY

Now part of Concrete. See Concrete below.

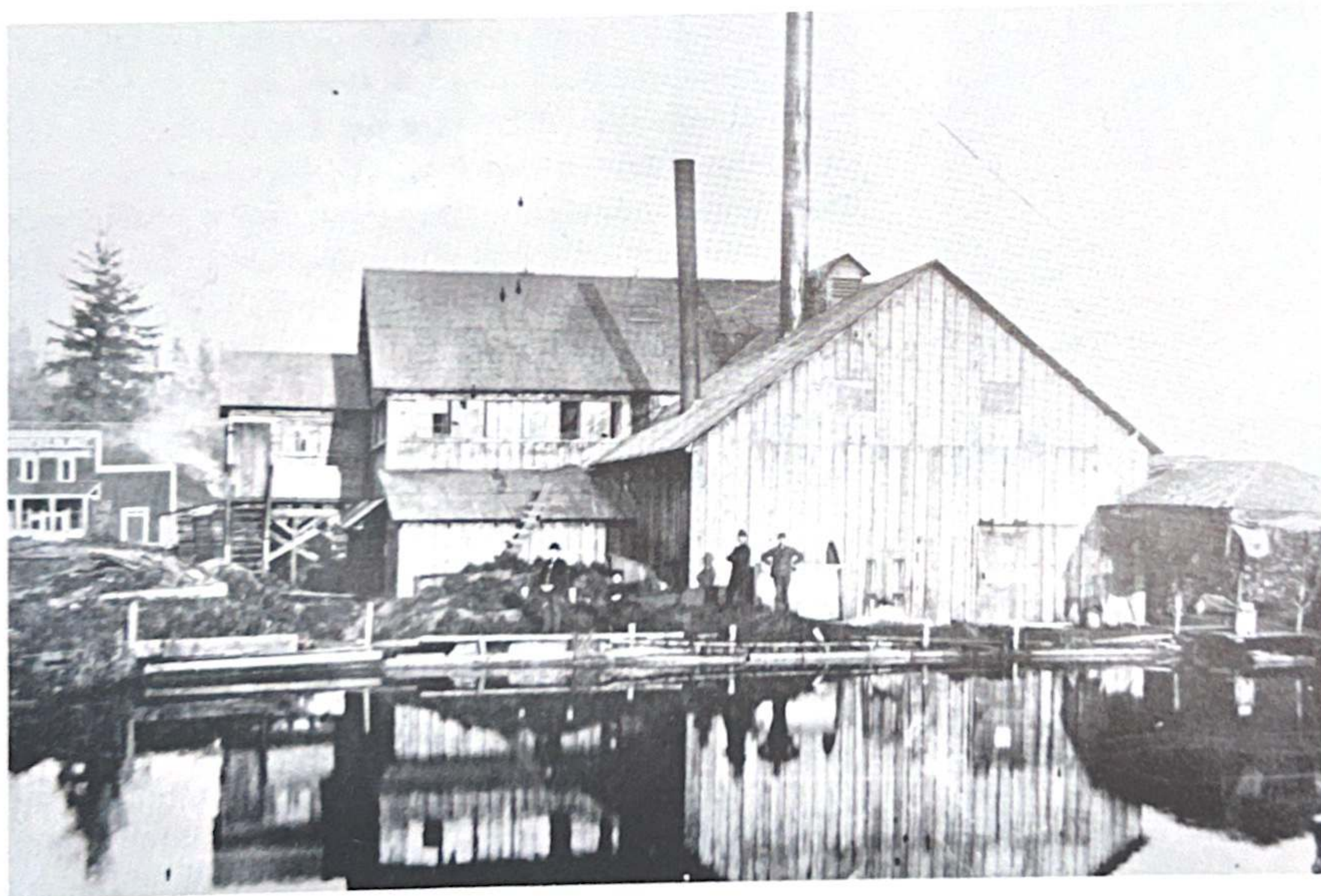
#### EHRlich

The land on which the town of Ehrlich later was built had been homesteaded in 1886 by Joseph and Anna Theiler from Switzerland. It lay in the valley between Lake McMurray and Big Lake and was reached only by a trail from Mount Vernon over which Mr. Theiler carried their household goods on his back. Albert Fisher, also from Switzerland, came in 1897, the Weppers from the Finn Settlement in 1895, and the Charles McInnes family in 1901. During the period immediately after the building of the railway the station was known as Theiler's Spur; the name was changed to Ehrlich when Frank Ehrlich of Seattle built a shingle mill there about 1900. The L. Houghton Company logged in the area and the Nelson Neal Lumber Company had a camp at Ehrlich. A flume from the north end of Lake McMurray brought shingle bolts to the mill and some were brought in by horses over a tram road.

In 1902 a school was built, lighted with kerosene lamps and heated by a wood burning stove. The teacher was the janitor, the wood getter, and the fire builder every morning, as well as teaching from 10 to 30 pupils in all eight grades, the numbers depending on the work in the mills and the camps.



Cokedale about 1901.  
From the collection of  
Jess Knutzen



Shingle mill at Ehrlich  
about 1908. Hughes &  
Blake General Merchandise  
in the left background.  
Original from  
Helen Millward

Ehrlich about 1908, the  
settlement which grew up  
around a shingle mill and  
disappeared when the mill  
closed.

Original from  
Helen Millward





The railroad operated two local trains each way every day as well as a through train from Seattle to Vancouver. The general store, operated by Hughes and Blake, carried everything from thread to cattle feed and was also the post office and the ticket office for the passenger trains. It had the only telephone in town.

When the mill and camps moved away the empty cook houses became recreation halls for the families who remained. The dining room floors, waxed, made perfect places for dancing, the kitchens had stoves for making coffee, and the women brought cake and sandwiches. The music was usually a violin played by Jake Bartl accompanied on an organ by Margaret Turner. The music was lively and lasted until 2:00 in the morning—square dances, waltzes, and two steps. Sometimes another old-time logger, Oscar Nelson, played the accordion all night without an accompaniment. The musicians were paid by passing the hat.

There is no trace left today of the scene of all the bustling activity. It disappeared with the timber, erased completely without even the reminders of a ghost town.

#### FIDALGO CITY

Fidalgo City was the name briefly used for the town near Deception Pass which was originally Deception and is now Dewey. The "City" was added to the name to distinguish it from William Munks' Fidalgo which was older.

#### FIR

Mann's Landing was one of the important river stops on the South Fork of the Skagit below Skagit City. It became Fir and was more important than its sister town, Conway, across the stream until the latter became a railway stop in 1891. The two were connected by a ferry for many years. A draw bridge was built in 1914 and business increasingly went to Conway, though Fir retained the principal church of the area, the Norwegian Lutheran church. Today the church is all that remains of Fir.

#### GOODELL'S LANDING

The head of canoe navigation on the Skagit was known as Goodell's Landing. During the 1880 gold rush Clothier and English set up a store there to supply the miners. When the City of Seattle built its power dams on the upper Skagit Goodell's Landing became Newhalem.

#### GRASMERE

When the railway reached the upper Skagit in 1901 C. W. Greist platted a townsite just east of Baker to be called Grasmere; he obtained a rail

stop and a post office which was set up in the store of A. Fred Carlson with Mrs. Anna Carlson as postmistress. Besides the general store Grasmere had a school, a shingle mill, a saloon, and a number of residences. Business, however, went to Baker and later to Concrete, the post office was closed in 1921, and the school consolidated with Concrete in 1936. Since the increase of traffic following the improvement of the roads up the Skagit, Grasmere has profited from strip-highway development but it is not a community.

#### LOOKOUT

This was the early name for Alger. See below.

#### MANN'S LANDING

The store at Fir was operated by Charles H. Mann beginning in 1876 and the river boats stopping there called it Mann's Landing. After 1880 the name Fir was generally used.

#### MILLTOWN

A couple of miles below Conway on the South Fork of the Skagit stood Milltown which once had two hotels, several saloons, a school, one or more mills, and much business from the important English Logging Company. One building stands today with a sign, "Milltown. Population 2."

#### MINKLER'S LANDING

The steamboat stop on the Skagit above Hamilton was Minkler's Landing. When the post office was established there it became Birdview.

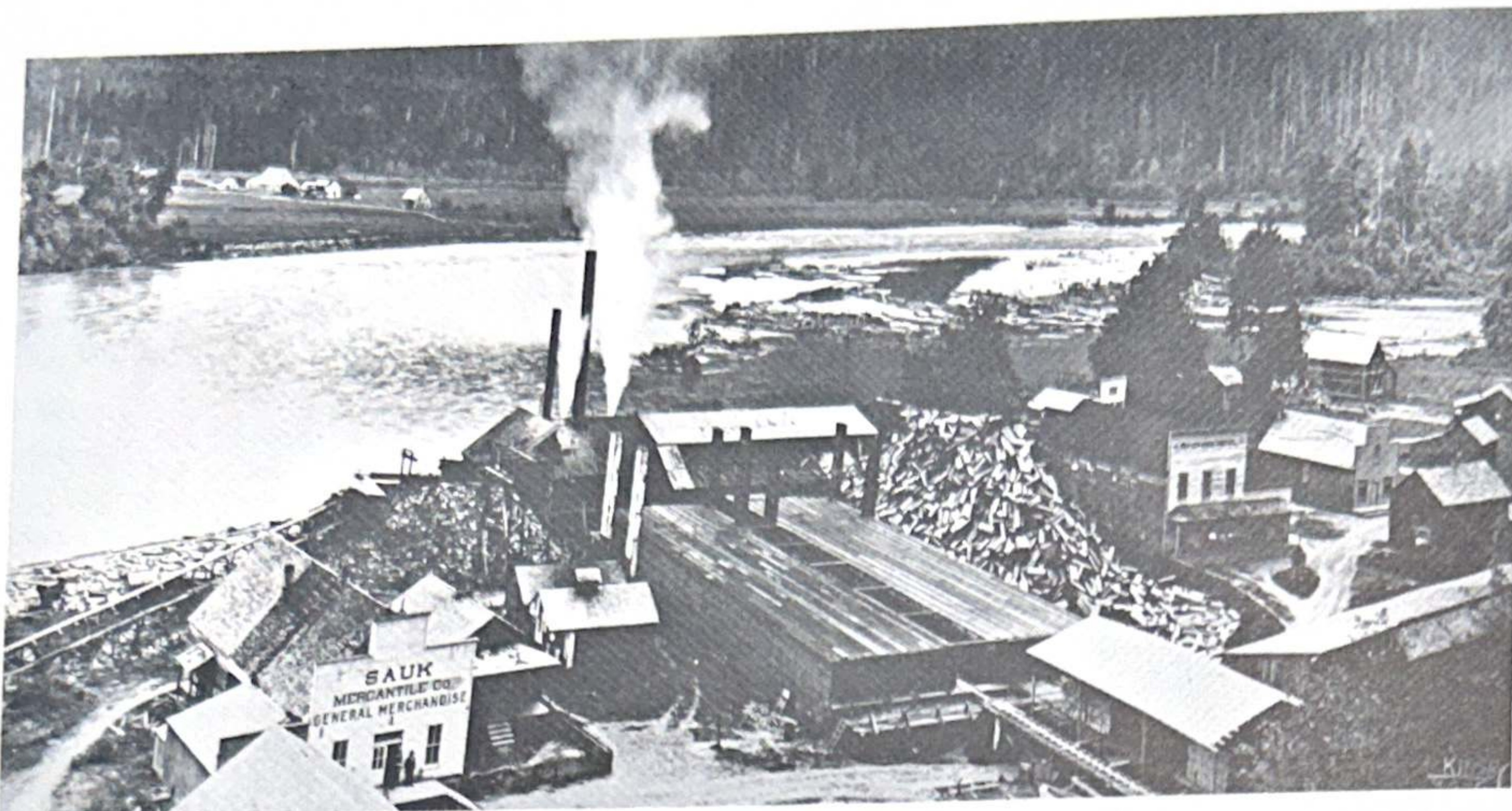
#### NORTH AVON

The railroad line from Anacortes to Burlington passes a mile north of Avon. In order to give Avon rail connections a station was erected at North Avon connected with Avon proper by a board sidewalk for the convenience of patrons. North Avon had a shingle mill with a bunk house for the men and a saloon for their entertainment, Avon itself being dry. When the erosion of the river-front Main Street in Avon necessitated the moving of the buildings along Main Street the Methodist church was placed on its present site between the two Avons. With the abandonment of passenger service on the railroad, the closing of the mill when its timber supply gave out, the improvement of roads, and the increase of automobile traffic there was no longer any reason for North Avon. Only one building remains today.

#### SAUK AND SAUK CITY

The first Sauk City stood on the south bank of the Skagit where the Sauk River once joined it. It was a stopping place for river steamers and the starting point for the "tote road" to the Monte Cristo mines as well as the trading post for the





Sauk around 1909  
the shingle mill and  
the general store.

A Darius Kinsey  
photograph, from the  
collection of Ella  
Smith Nichols

prospectors and settlers moving into the valley of the Sauk. A ferry connected it with the north (right) bank of the Skagit. A sawmill, shingle mill, and many logging camps in the area contributed to its growth. Several fires destroyed much of the town and the great flood of 1897 swept part of it away and changed the course of the river so that subsequent erosion took the business district. Meanwhile a shorter route had been discovered from Everett to Monte Cristo and the railroad which was to be a branch of the Great Northern was building up the north side of the Skagit. In 1890 Thomas F. Moody and S. W. Sutherland platted another town which was to be on the railroad and on higher ground directly across the river. When the railroad finally arrived in 1901 it called the rail stop "Montview," but as the community grew and the earlier Sauk faded it began

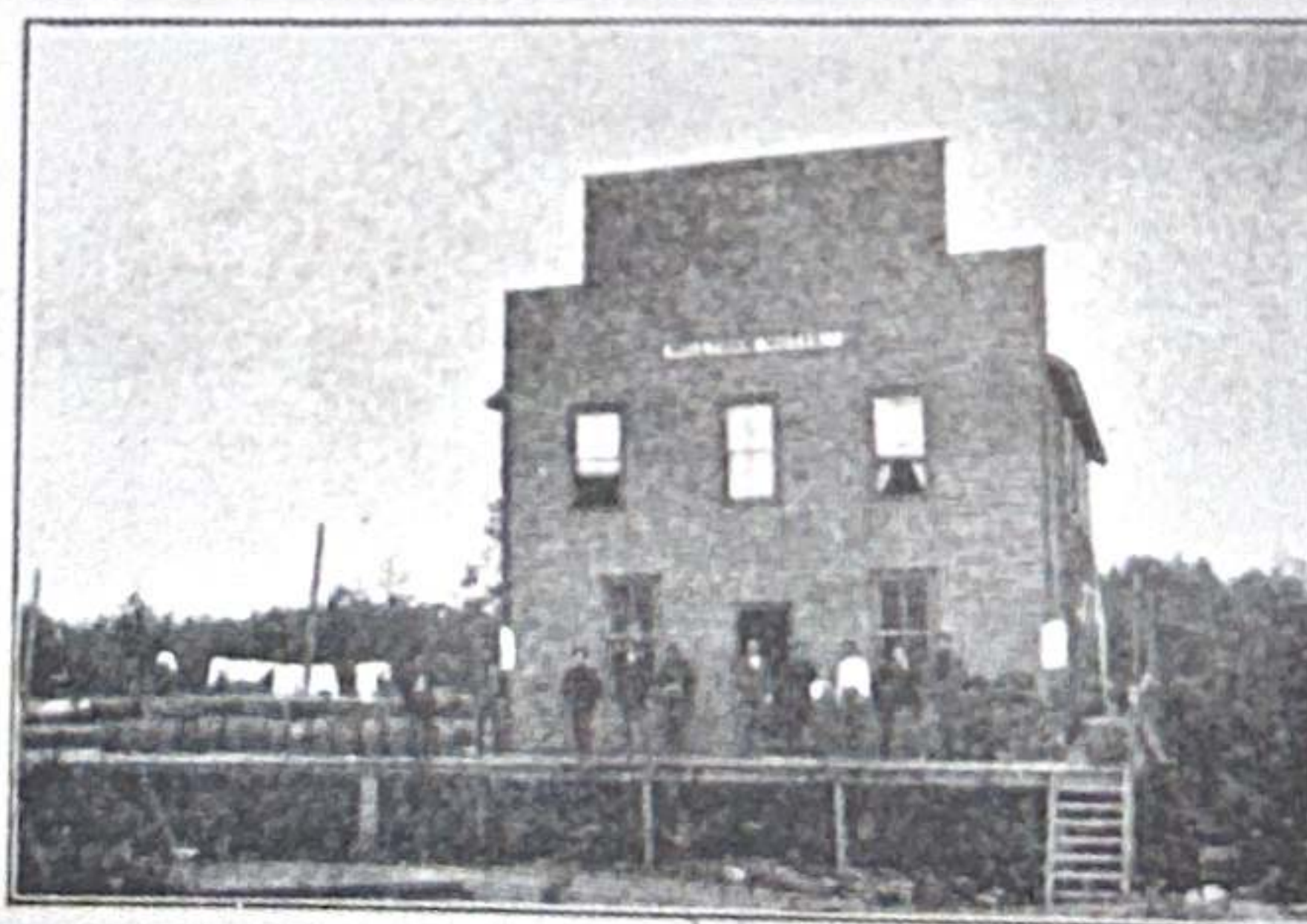
to call itself Sauk. Time passed, the local timber was exhausted, mills burned, and Sauk shrank. When the rail line was abandoned there was little left of the town.

#### SKAGIT CITY

The metropolis of the Skagit from the 1870s into the 1890s was Skagit City, located on Fir Island on the South Fork a mile below the point where the North and South Forks divide. A steamer called regularly once a month. When the log jams were still in the river all the mail for up-river points was left here and distributed from Skagit City. After the jams were cleared it was still an important river stop for all sternwheelers. Church camp meetings, Christmas parties, meetings which drew from all over the county like the organization of the first Pioneer Association — such things were held at Skagit City. A ferry connected it to the

#### Milltown Hotel, Milltown, Wash.

This popular hostelry is owned and conducted by "Billy" Rogers at Milltown, five miles south of Mount Vernon on the Great Northern railroad. It is headquarters for all traveling men who visit that place, and the hundreds of duck hunters from Seattle, Everett and all parts of Skagit county, who spends considerable time hunting in and around Milltown. Mr. Rogers is one of those whole-souled landlords who make his guests feel as though they were "at home."



Of all the counties in this part of the state, Skagit stands first in development, considering its area and the advantages offered. Tracts of land suitable for miscellaneous farming, dairying, stock raising, fruit raising, can be obtained.

Reproduced for the  
Ronald Holtum  
collection from  
Sebring's SKAGIT  
COUNTY  
ILLUSTRATED, 1903.



left bank of the river. In its great days it had churches, a school, hotels, saloons, and numerous business houses facing the river bank.

One cause of its decline was the erosion of the steep bank against which the sternwheelers tied up. More important was the competition from Mount Vernon as a river port after the log jams were cleared and the increasing importance of Conway and Fir after the arrival of the railroad. Skagit City lingered on until its ferry was discontinued in 1929. Today nothing is left of it except the name, Skagit City Road, for the road which winds north from Fir along the river and one building which is recognizable only to the initiated.

**STERLING**

Activity began at Ball's Landing, later to be known as Sterling, in 1878 in anticipation of the opening of a passage through the log jams. At this point just below Sedro there were rich stands of timber to be logged close to the river and stump farmers were following close behind the loggers. Jesse B. Ball who began the logging also started a trading post. In the 1880s Sterling had logging camps, a hotel, a church, a school, and saloons. It stood at a bend in the river, subject to erosion. The railroad passed it by a mile to the north and east. Sedro and Woolley which were on the rail lines flourished, but after 1890 Sterling decayed and when the local timber was gone it vanished, partly absorbed by its growing neighbors.

#### **SEDRO**

The town of Sedro on the river was older than Woolley. The bitter rivalry between the two ended when they had to all intents and purposes grown together and decided to amalgamate rather than fight.

#### **VAN HORN**

When the railway came to the upper Skagit in 1901 Jesse V. Van Horn looked over the area to find a good site for a mill and chose a location about three miles east of Concrete in 1902. He also built a hotel and a general store and applied for a post office to be called Van, but which the Post Office Department changed to Van Horn. The hotel burned in 1917 and the mill in 1920. Since that time there have been several small business enterprises and the surrounding area is now well settled but the Van Horn post office has long since disappeared.

#### **WHITNEY STATION**

When the railway was built east from Anacortes in 1890 Whitney Station was chosen as a stop because it was closest to LaConner, Padilla,

and Bay View. It was named in honor of Rienzi Whitney. What was left of Padilla moved to Whitney including the post office. No important settlement developed around the depot. Today the spot is marked only by the sign, "Whitney," beside the railroad track.

#### **WOOLLEY**

Woolley began because of the railroads and flourished with them. Its river bank rival, Sedro, finally merged with it to make Sedro-Woolley, at first with a hyphen which is sometimes still used.

#### **5. VILLAGES WITH A PAST**

#### **ALGER**

Until the 1880s the area around Alger, then known as Lookout, was a wilderness of splendid virgin timber, reached only by trails, and with few settlers. In 1889 the rails of the Fairhaven and Southern Railway, engineered by J. J. Donovan, opened up the region. In 1891 School District No. 48 was organized, F. G. Abbey, G. N. Hancock, and A. Little directors, who employed Emma Herren as the first teacher with 11 pupils at a salary of \$45 a month. The school continued under the name Lookout until 1914.

It is not clear just when the name Alger began to be used but the expanding Bloedel-Donovan empire, the Lake Whatcom Logging Company, bought out the Alger Logging Company of Russell Alger and Revaux K. Hawley in 1901 and later added the timber holdings of E. L. Gaudette and of the Belfast Manufacturing Company. Logging operations continued at high speed through the First World War—soldiers of the "Spruce Division" were assigned to get out timber faster for the wood and canvas airplanes which fought in France. Hundreds of men worked in the woods, on the log trains, and in the mills. The Kachinko Tavern and the Bliss Dance Hall gave them their diversion.

When the virgin timber was gone in the 1920s the railways abandoned their lines and Alger relaxed into a quiet country village. Some of the logged off land made good farms and the rest is now covered with second growth timber. Route 99, the Pacific Highway, passed through Alger, but Interstate 5 passes to the side without touching it.

#### **ALLEN**

When logging began along the Samish the river as it left the hills spread out into so many forks and sloughs across the delta that there was no mouth with sufficient water to float the logs. In the 1880s the loggers cleared out one of the channels which went past Allen, blocking off other



sloughs to make it the main stream down which logs were driven on the "splash," the minor flood created when wooden dams on the upper river were opened. (This was an old logger's trick, developed in the Maine woods.) Allen became a minor trading center with the opening of a road to Avon and the location of the Allen-Roray Shingle Mill there in 1903. The school had only one room until 1906 when it was replaced by a new two-room building. Bill Watkinson built a dance hall and roller rink in 1907; Grange meetings were also held there. The old school building was used for church services until a church was built and dedicated in 1915. Allen became a station on the Interurban in 1912. There was a store in town but no saloon, the only community of any size other than Avon which was consistently dry. With the coming of automobiles and the improvement of roads the importance of Allen declined but it has remained a rural center.

#### AYON

Avon at one time rivaled most of the towns along the river in importance. Its school had 140 pupils enrolled in the 1900-01 school year. In 1957 Ada Hall wrote, "When I came to Avon in 1911 (to teach) the school had seven teachers and 250 children. . . . There were board walks all over town and a board walk to North Avon. Many a time after school we would walk to Mount Vernon (along the top of the dike) to do our shopping, eat in a restaurant, and come home by train. We would get on in Mount Vernon, transfer at Burlington and get off at North Avon. We had lots of fun in those days."

During the next decade the river bank of Avon eroded, requiring the moving of all the

buildings which lined it. As roads improved and the number of automobiles increased the highways sucked the farmers' trade away from it toward Burlington and Mount Vernon. The importance of river traffic declined, the Avon school consolidated with Mount Vernon, and the chief community centers which remained were the grocery store and the Methodist church, moved from its endangered riverside location to its present site. By 1920 Avon had become the pleasant residential village which it is today, beloved by its inhabitants present and past.

#### BAY VIEW

Bay View was chosen by W. J. McKenna as the site for a store which Mr. Jennings wished to open to supply the necessities to the loggers and mill workers who were coming to cut the timber on the ridge. It had a school and a post office by 1884 and two mills in the 1890s, a lumber mill and a shingle mill. Boats docked at a long pier and at the rear of the waterfront buildings. By 1910 the timber harvest was virtually completed so when the dock and most of the waterfront buildings burned on January 1, 1910, they were not rebuilt. Bay View had no rail connections except through Whitney Station several miles away across diked flats and sloughs. The ridge itself has rocky soil, not good for much but orchards or grazing. It has always had beautiful residential sites, well drained and with lovely views, and these became its chief attraction after 1910.

#### BIG LAKE

The building of the Seattle Lakeshore and Eastern Railway, later purchased by the Northern Pacific, gave transportation which permitted the harvesting of the splendid stands of virgin timber

Bay View in 1909 or 1910 when boats came up to the dock or to the backs of the waterfront stores to unload. The writer of the postcard invited the recipient to come for the Fourth of July celebration.

*From collection of the Skagit County Historical Museum*



The dock and many of the waterfront buildings at Bay View burned on January 1, 1910. That section of the town was never rebuilt.

*From collection of the Skagit County Historical Museum*





around Big Lake and the Day Lumber Company took full advantage of them. Logging railroads ran back into the hills to bring the logs to its huge mill at the north end of the lake. Around the work of the mill there grew up a company town — the company owned the store, the community hall where all meetings were held including church and Sunday School until 1917, the houses in which workers lived, a farm which tended the horses used in logging and supplied milk and other products to the company store, the hospital, and even at times the money used in trading at the store. Work in the woods and the mills was dangerous and accidents were frequent so a local hospital was important. The business of the Day Lumber Company tapered off as the nearby timber was exhausted and the mill closed. Since that time the logged-off hills have either been cleared and converted into farms or nature has clothed them with second growth forests. The beauty of the lake and its surroundings make it a very desirable residential area.

#### BLANCHARD

The mouth of Colony Creek at the very foot of the Chuckanuts offered a sheltered site for a mill and the miles of tide flats between Samish Island and the mountains were ideal for oyster cultivation. The Blanchard Logging Company was working the nearby hills but the post office was named Fravel in honor of the engineer who laid out the legendary telegraph line in 1864-65 and later settled near Colony Creek. When the Great Northern Railway opened its cut-off to Bellingham in 1902, skirting the base of the mountains, they named the station Blanchard. The citizens held a referendum to settle between Fravel, the post office, and Blanchard, the depot, and chose Blanchard. The logging and the mill are long gone. Blanchard retains its post office but sends its children by bus to the Edison school; it maintains a community hall in the remodeled Great Northern depot building, has a Methodist church served by the same minister as Allen, and keeps up a great deal of community feeling.

#### BOW

When the Great Northern rerouted its main north-south line to follow around the foot of the Chuckanuts in 1902 the town of Bow was born. There was an older place nearby called Brownsville, but Bill Brown christened the new station Bow in honor of the Bow station district in London from which he came. Bow was the railway stop for the rich area of the Samish flats, soon



Walter Boyce, first postmaster of Big Lake in 1909. Before that the mail came to the railroad station.  
*Original given to Josephine Barringer Hoffman by Mrs. Poust*



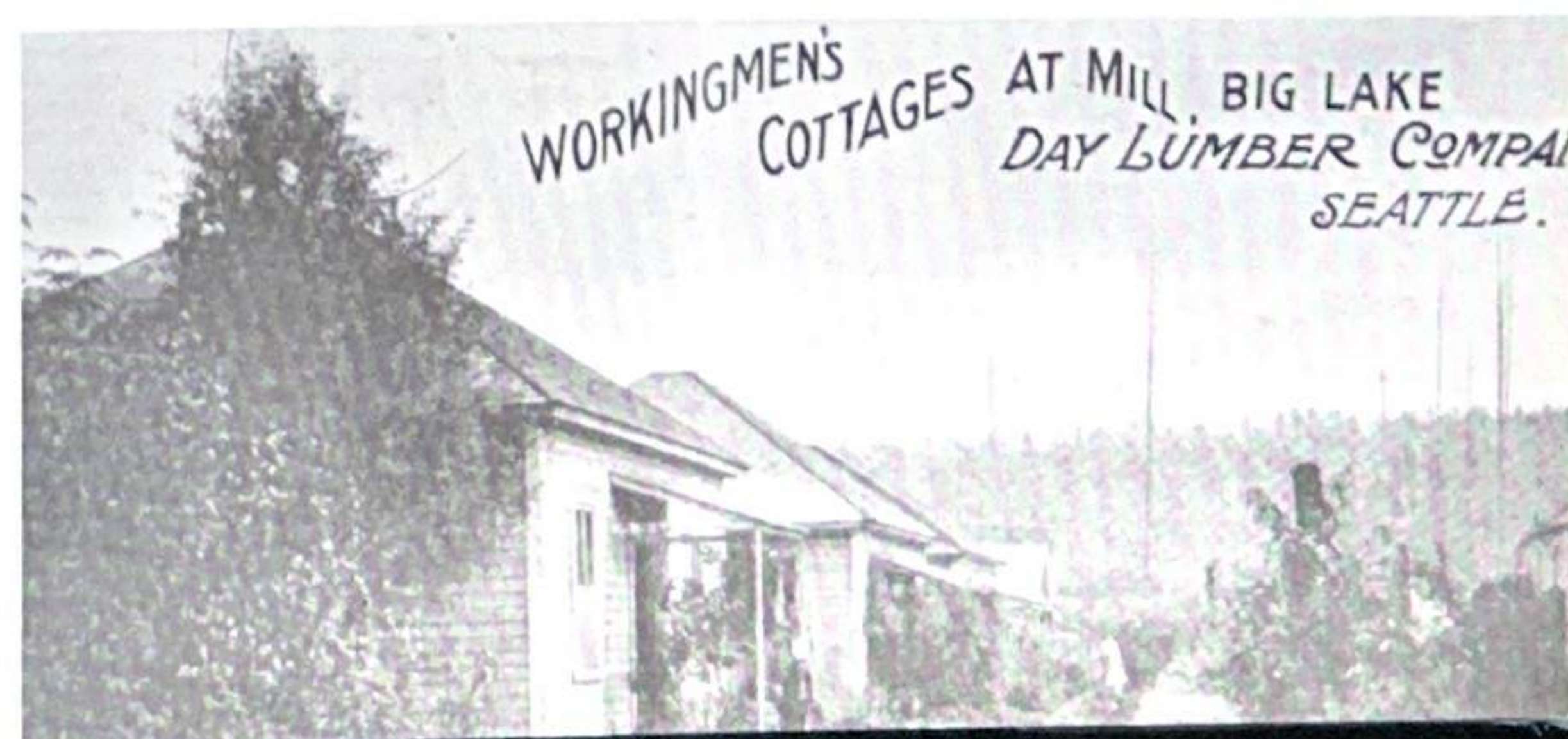
Big Lake was a company town. This is the Day Lumber Company general store and the Big Lake Post Office around 1910.  
*Original given Josephine Barringer Hoffman by Mrs. Poust*



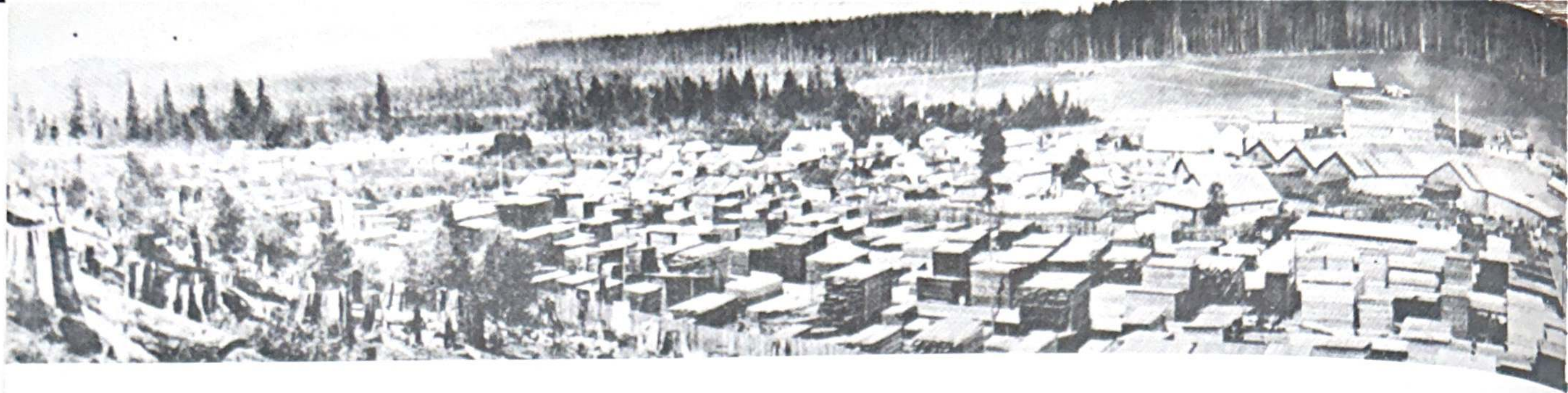
Big Lake Hospital in 1912.  
*Picture from Effie Calkins*

Day Lumber Company of Big Lake printed this postcard (the original was in color) to attract family men as workers. It was sent by someone named Rice who lived in one of the houses shown to friends in Chicago. The postmark is Seattle, May 25, 1909.

*Original from Josephine Barringer Hoffman*







taking a great deal of the traffic away from the boats which called at Samish Island and the smaller ones which came up the slough to dock at Edison or even at Bow. Bow had a large general store, a hotel, meat market, post office, livery stable, school, church, and other facilities to make it a residential and trading center. When roads improved, however, farmers took their business to larger towns. Chuckanut Drive passed it by and after some time the post office was moved from the town to a place on the highway and made the center for rural routes. The town of Bow, nestled back near the foot of Bow Hill, still has a church and many pleasant homes, but no station, stores, or school. It is unknown to makers of road atlases or to people who stick to highways.

#### CLEAR LAKE

The land immediately around Clear Lake was settled well before the railroads reached the area. Charles Edgar Turner built a cabin there in 1884. When he walked to Mount Vernon for supplies he had to find an Indian to ferry him over the

Nookachamps. The HISTORY relates his story of breaking a lamp chimney in bringing it home to his cabin, making a second trip to replace it, and breaking the second one in his cabin as he unpacked it. The third trip made a total of 55 miles for one lamp chimney. Robert Isaacson, John Pringle, and Jacob Bartl were other early settlers. The coming of the railway in 1890 made Sedro Woolley the nearest shopping center and stimulated the development of logging and lumbering, though the lean years which followed 1893 slowed things down until the revival of the late 1890s. The great days of Clear Lake came with the growth of the Clear Lake Lumber Company which flourished from the late 1890s until it burned in May of 1918 with a loss reported at the time as \$400,000, but was rebuilt. Its final closing profoundly depressed the town but Clear Lake has continued on a much restricted basis, now depending in part on two shake mills and a talc plant, but mainly on the agricultural region surrounding it. Its churches and school help to keep it as a community and it retains its own post office.

Bow. Inside the Bow Meat Market in 1910. The small boy at the left is Paul Shadle; in the center is his father, Roy Shadle; on the right is his grandfather, Lou D. Shadle.  
*Picture from Paul Shadle*



Bow. U.S. Post Office and Shadle's Meat Market in 1910. Roy Shadle and two unidentified boys are on the delivery wagon, Lou D. Shadle in front of it. Note the side of beef hanging in front of the store behind the horses' heads.  
*Picture from Paul Shadle*







## THE TOWN OF CONCRETE

The unique name of "Concrete" was chosen by the residents on both sides of the Baker River when the town was incorporated—the selection being in deference to a cement plant in each half of the community which made the area's principal product—cement.

Amasa Everett, early day prospector, staked his claim for a homestead on the east bank of the Baker River near its entrance to the Skagit in 1875. The flat on the west bank was claimed by Richard Challenger in 1888 and he listed it on the early maps as "Minnehaha." He sold the land to Magnus Miller in 1890 and the name was changed to "Baker." Miller platted his town and built a large home which soon became a hostel for river travelers and the center of a growing business district. A post office was established in 1892 with Miller as first postmaster. Wilson M. Aldridge was the pioneer storekeeper and the main industry was a shingle mill, the Baker River Lumber Company. Population in 1909 was 213.

In 1904 O. C. Miller purchased 45 acres from Amasa Everett on the east bank and in September of 1905 began building a cement plant, backed by huge deposits of limestone discovered in the vicinity by Everett. The land around the plant was platted for homes of the employees, a hotel built and a general store opened. The settlement was called "Cement City."

In 1906 John C. Eden began to build another plant on the west side of the river for Superior Portland Cement, Inc. He had 80 acres, plus 240 acres of limestone above the Baker canyon. This plant was in production on July 22, 1908.

A listing of the business and new buildings in town at this time included the shingle mill, two hotels, three general stores, two pool halls, shoe shop, meat market, bakery, confectionery, drug store, two restaurants, blacksmith shop, tailor shop, three saloons, and a brand new Presbyterian church.

After a bitter battle over which side of the river would have the depot an agreement was reached by incorporation of the two communities

into one called "Concrete." The first council, with shingle man D. D. Dillard as first mayor, met May 10, 1909 with the adoption of the name as first order of business.

The cement plants produced extra power and provided electricity for the town, also installing the water system. A local telephone company was formed with Kate Glover as manager and Nell Quackenbush Wheelock as lineman and installer. The town began to grow, adding among other things, a theater and a cigar factory. A second newspaper was started to journalistically oppose the Concrete Herald, which had been moved up from Hamilton. The town became the center of activity for the upper valley's loggers, quarrymen and mill workers. It took several barber shops to handle the Saturday trade before the men could start out for an evening on the town. Entertainment was provided by several hotels and an equal number of sporting houses, plus a saloon in every other building on Main Street—fourteen at the highest peak. Three more were off the main avenue.

Peak population of Concrete during its boom days was 1,700. Decline began when the Superior plant bought out and closed the Washington plant in 1919. The community then became a "company town" with all fortunes dependent upon the rise and fall of the cement market. The Superior plant became the largest cement plant in the state and in later years was to furnish over 40 per cent of all the cement that went into Grand Coulee Dam. It also supplied cement for the Baker River Dams and the Seattle City Light Dams at Diablo, Ross, and Gorge on the Skagit.

The cement plant covered the community with a fine dust for years, the nuisance ruining the appearance of homes, setting up on car enamels and filling the eyes of residents until they demanded that dust collectors be installed. The dust continued in smaller quantities and it was not until the plant was closed and dismantled in 1968 that the town enjoyed clean mountain air. Concrete is now a quiet residential community and shopping center along the North Cascade Highway.





Bow. Inside the general store about 1909. The owner, Mr. Wrigley, is at the left; next Mr. Wrigley's son; then Flossie Shadle (later Mrs. Raines); Mrs. Shadle; Clyde Des Noyer.  
*Picture from Paul Shadle*



Bow business district about 1910. The buildings house the livery stable, hotel, post office, and meat market. The men with the horses are J. R. Walter and Bob Dale.  
*Original from Paul Shadle*



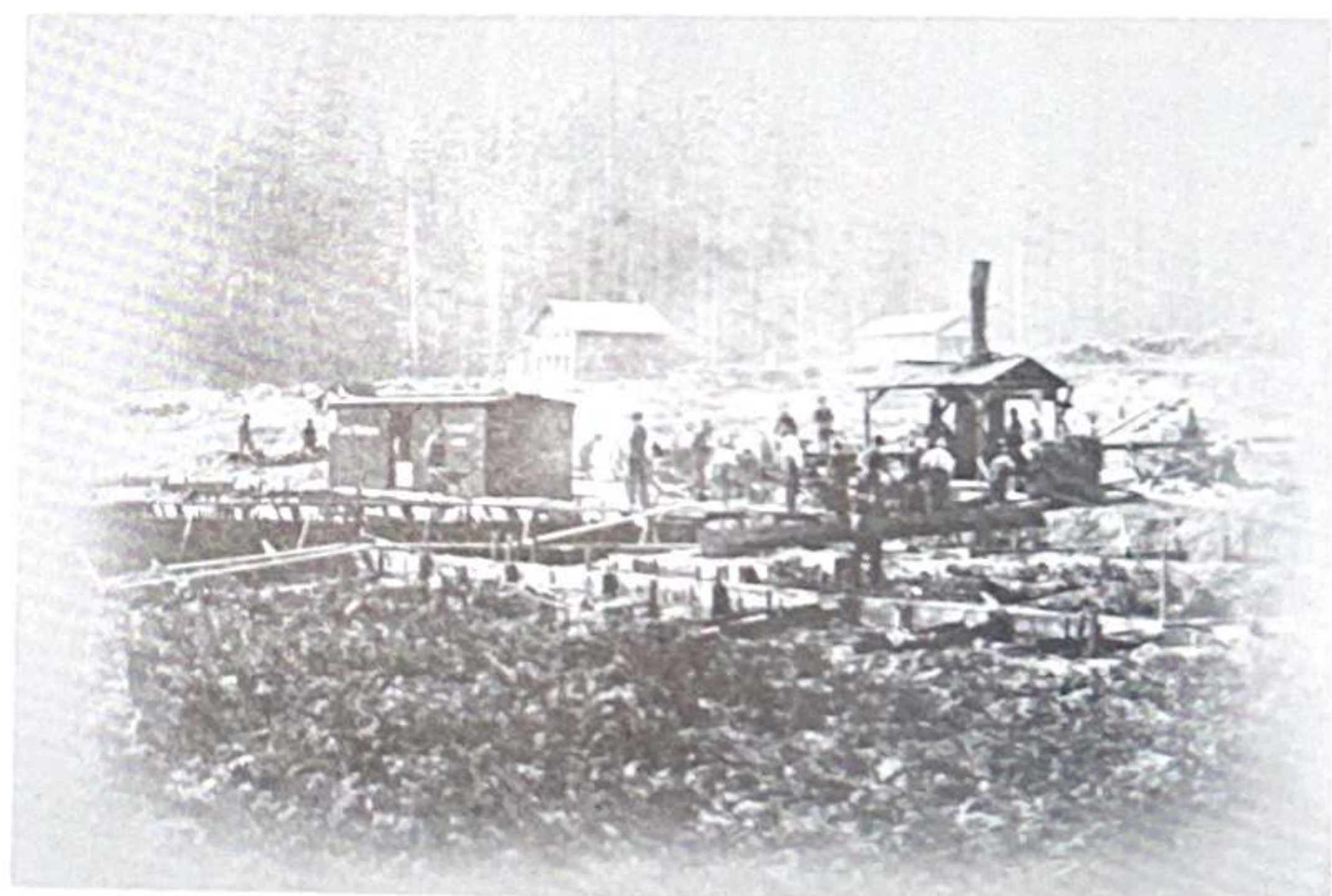
Clear Lake Main Street about 1910. The railroad station is in the distance on the right.  
*Original from Effie Calkins*



Clear Lake store and post office about 1907. The store was operated by W. O. Beddall who was also postmaster. Note the hitching posts at the right.  
*Original from Effie Calkins*



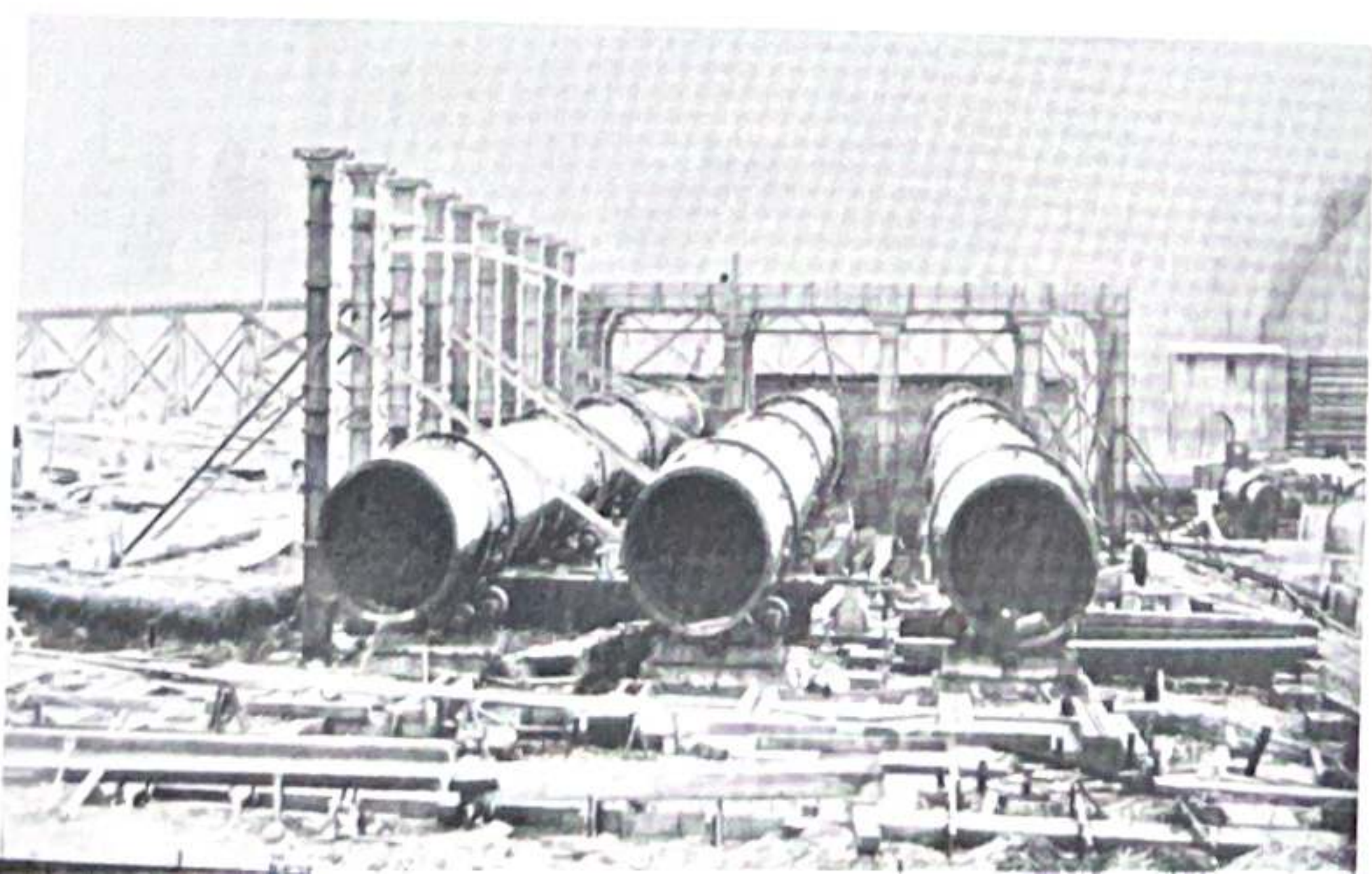
Beginning the construction of the Superior Portland Cement plant at Concrete in 1906.  
*From the collection of Charles Dwelley*



Laying the foundations for the Superior Portland Cement Company plant at Concrete in 1906.  
*From the collection of Charles Dwelley*

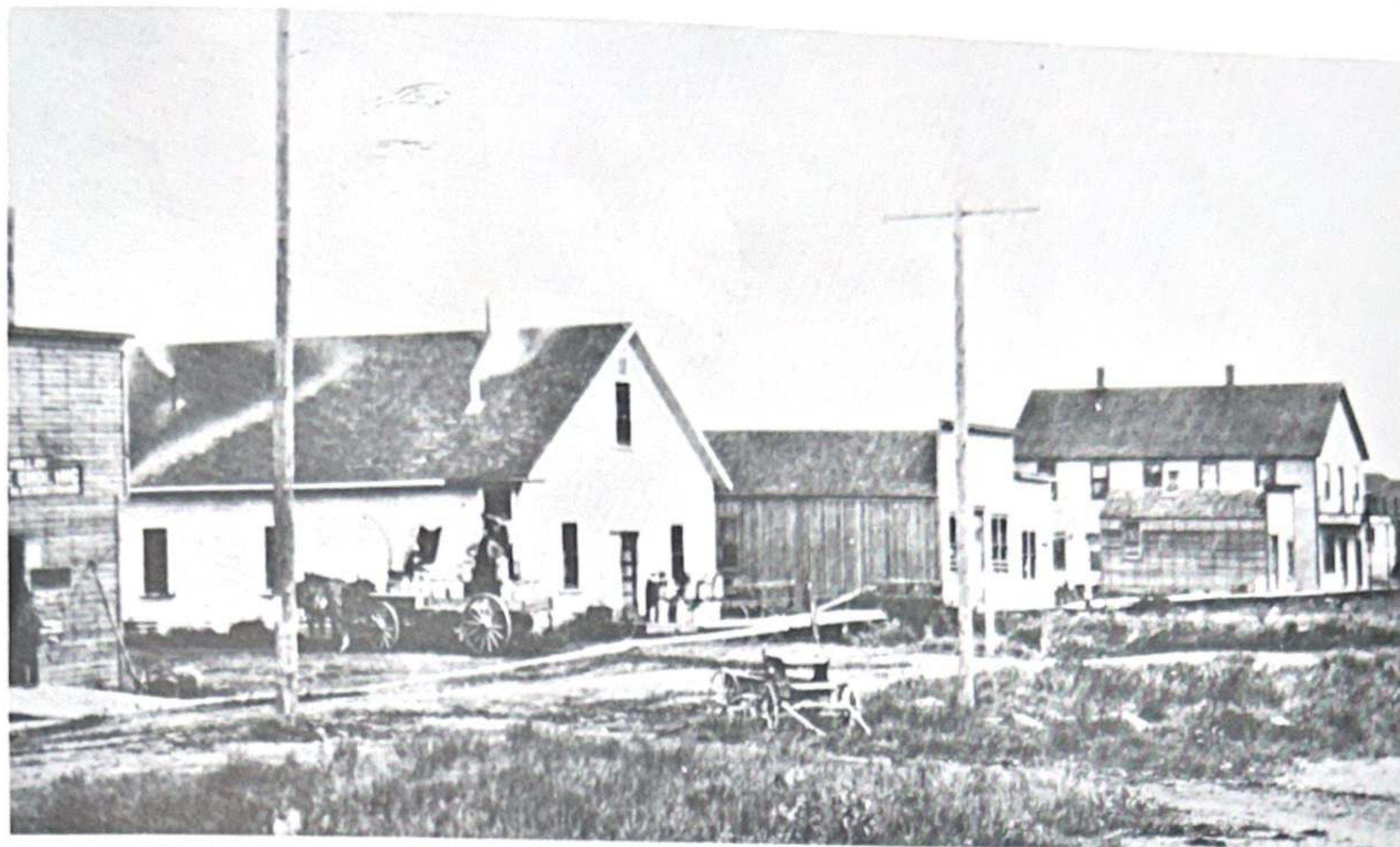
Kilns for the Superior Portland Cement Company plant at Concrete being built in 1906.  
*From the collection of Charles Dwelley*

Reproduced from a postcard put out by "E. J. Siegrist Jeweler and Optician, Cameras and Photographic Supplies."  
*From the collection of Charles Dwelley*





Conway in 1909. The white building left center is the Finstad-Utgard Creamery. Following down the street are the barber shop, saloon, tailor shop, and the hotel. Picture from the Tronsdal collection



## CONWAY

Until the coming of the Great Northern Railway in 1891 Conway was little more than a store and the landing place for the ferry to Fir. After it had a railway station it began to grow faster than its sister town across the South Fork. It has suffered frequently from floods but insured against them by elevating the first floors high above the ground. The bridge which replaced the ferry in 1914 added to the importance of Conway as the outlet for Fir Island. While modern roads have tended to diminish the amount of trade which stops in the town it retains its church across the river in Fir, keeps control of its own elementary school, and still supports some local businesses.

## DEWEY

The settlement at the south end of Fidalgo Island just inside Deception Pass was first called Deception. Halpin's store was there and it had a mill for a time, powered by the water flowing from Lake Campbell down to the bay. A little later it was Fidalgo City, the "City" to distinguish it from William Munks' Fidalgo on March's Point. For a brief moment in 1891 it was connected with Anacortes by an electric street car which made just one trip at the height of the Anacortes boom. The collapse of the boom and the hard times which followed 1893 left the town with vacant buildings which were often used for odd purposes, the hotel building which was filled with white leghorn hens, for instance. After the Spanish-American War the name was changed to Dewey in honor of the Admiral. The ferry from Dewey to Cornet Bay was begun by Fred Finsen in 1913 and continued in

operation under different owners until the Deception Pass bridge opened. Dewey today is a very well-kept residential community of handsome homes.

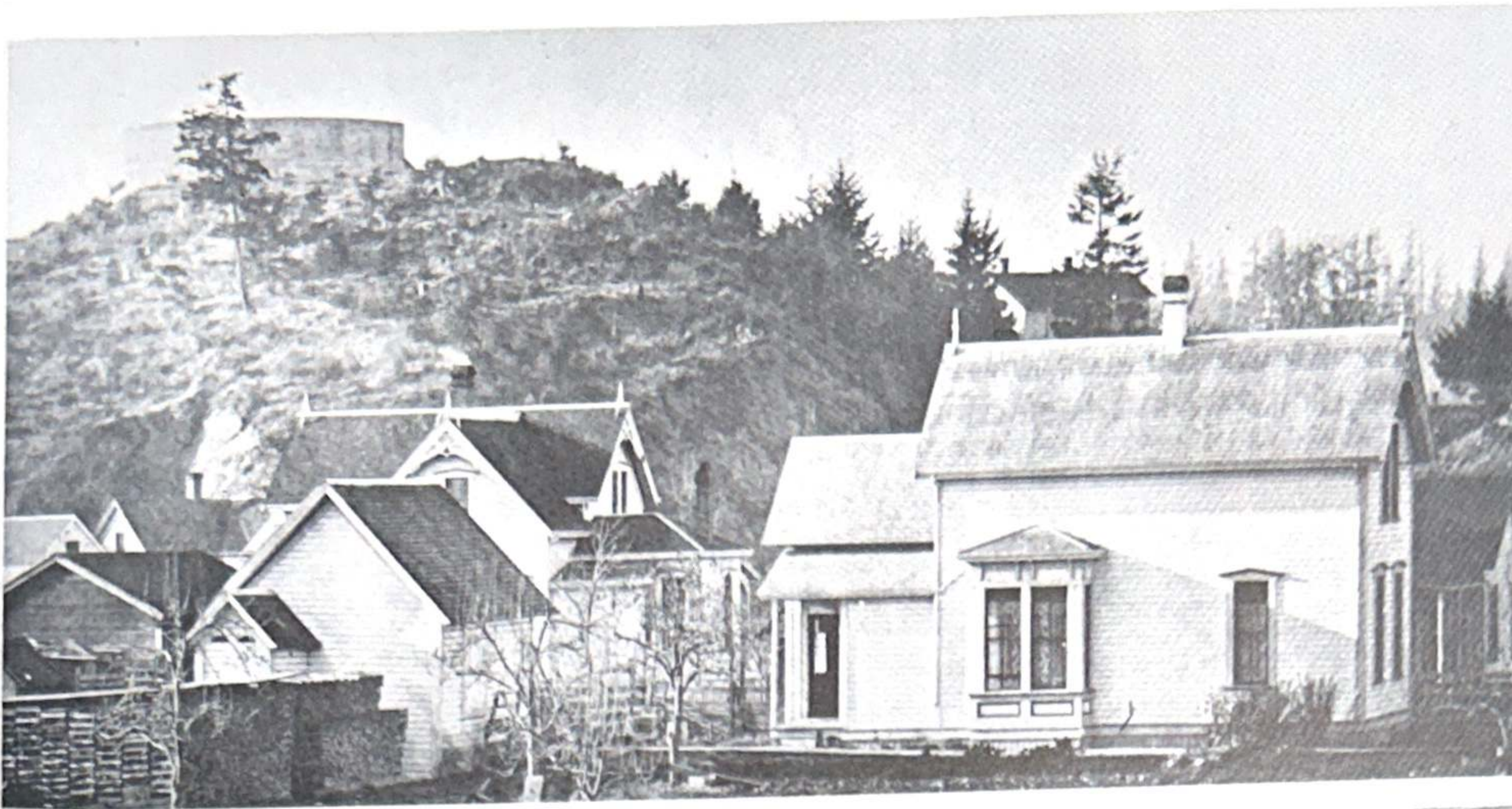
## EDISON

The rich farms of the Samish flats were among the first in the county to be diked and drained but the ground is so near sea level that land travel except along the tops of the dikes was very difficult for a long time. The waterways leading to Samish Island remained Edison's connection with the rest of the county and the world until well into the 20th century. Edison celebrated its centenary in 1969, the anniversary of the arrival and first homestead of Ben Sampson.

The I.O.O.F. Lodge was chartered in 1887 and built a hall which served as a community center; the Rebekahs received their charter in 1895. The town began building a water system in 1890 to bring water from the Chuckanuts; it was completed in 1892 and the bored wooden pipes were so good that some of them lasted for fifty years. Business prospered because of the fine agricultural region and the logging camps, lumber, and shingle mills in or near the town. Oyster cultivation began on the tide flats after 1900. Edison had no direct rail connections until the Interurban came through in 1912.

The town always took pride in its schools and was one of the first in the county to establish an accredited high school. The most famous product of the local schools is Edward R. Murrow who practically created radio journalism during World War II. The town early established three churches,





The hill at La Conner when the old water tank occupied the place where the Museum now stands.

Congregational, Roman Catholic, and Norwegian Lutheran, the latter outside the town to the south in the center of agricultural "Little Norway."

Boats can no longer come up Edison slough to the town though there are still navigable sloughs nearby. The town is now a prosperous and pleasant residential community.

#### HAMILTON

Although a good many miles up the Skagit beyond Sedro Woolley Hamilton began getting attention early because of the discovery of extensive coal deposits south of the river. The mines were worked sporadically and exhibits of coal and of iron ore were sent to the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893 and to St. Louis in 1904. However it was the timber which brought prosperity to Hamilton rather than mining. In the early 1900s it had a population of nearly 2,000. It was at the end of the rail line from Anacortes until 1901 when the rails reached their farthest point at Rockport. Hamilton took pride in its schools and had one of the first hot lunch programs in the county. It incorporated as a city in 1891 and struggled with the usual municipal problems of the day—how many saloons to license, whether to light the streets with kerosene or with electricity or not to light them at all, whether to keep cows off the streets or only pigs, how to get the wooden sidewalks back in place after floods floated them to new locations, whether to confine bawdy houses to a particular section or allow them to operate where they chose.

As the standing timber was turned into lumber and shingles and the mines closed, Hamilton turned more to agriculture and the population declined. As roads improved loggers and mill



Gaches' store in La Conner about 1880, located just south of the McGlinn Hotel which later became the Nordic Inn. On the balcony without a hat is Mrs. James Gaches.

*Original from Eva Gaches Collinson*

workers could travel greater distances to their work so many continued to live in Hamilton. Though it is a small settlement today it does not have the appearance of a ghost town but rather seems a peaceful hamlet.

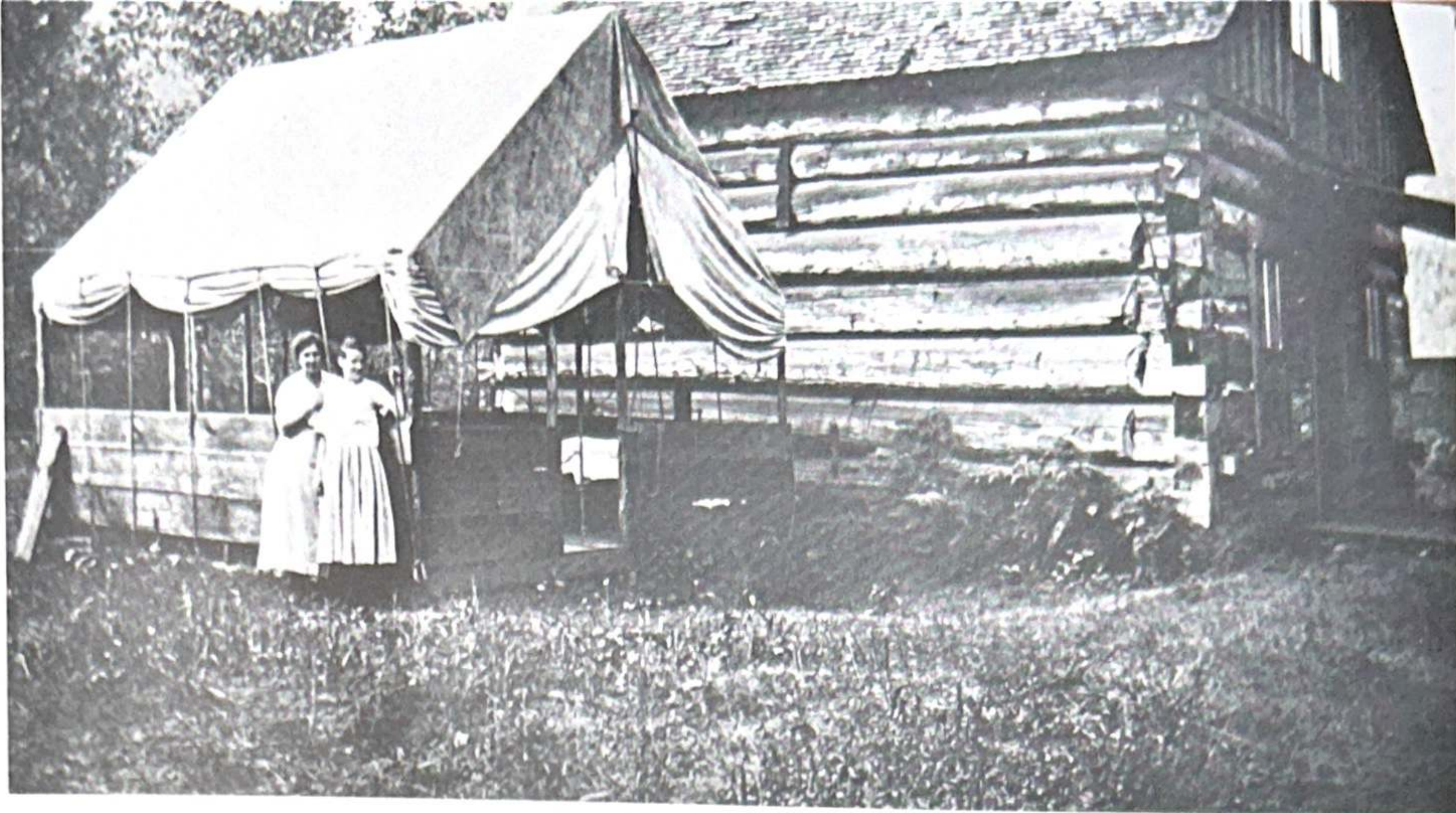
#### LaCONNER

The oldest town in the county grew where high ground abutted on the salt water of Swinomish Channel. LaConner's period of greatness coincided with the time when water transportation was supreme and it was the outlet for the produce of the Skagit flats and the market center where goods from the rest of the world could be obtained. The railroads and the improving roads undercut its dominant position but left it a charming town, rich in tradition and jealously conserving its own school system against the tide of consolidation. It had the earliest public high school in the county and the Tillinghast Seed Company is probably the oldest continuous business. The location of the Skagit County Historical Museum on its hill is particularly appropriate.



Marblemount. A tent saloon was started by Theodore Emery about 1900 and Sadie Siverling bought it later. This tent was used as a sleeping and washing area.

*Picture from Hazel Tracy*



Sadie Siverling Cudworth's boarding house at Marblemount in the early 1900s. This building is still standing and in use today.

*Picture from Hazel Tracy*

## LYMAN

Settlement in the Lyman area began early. According to the HISTORY a bachelor, A. R. Williamson, began growing hops there in 1872 or 1873. Two cousins, Henry Cooper and Henry Leggett came in 1881 and about the same time Otto Klement opened a trading post with the store, hotel, saloon, and post office all in the same building which soon became a center for people coming up the river. The first school opened in the 1880s in an old saloon and was replaced in 1890 with a new building near the river bank. Klement laid out the town plat and by 1889 it had a general store, a hotel, a livery stable, a town hall, and a church. The town never boomed even when the railway came through in 1890, but it was always the center for a farming district and for some of the activity of the woods. It has remained about the same size for many years.

## MARBLEMOUNT

This community began as a mining trading post during the gold rush of the 1890s. The first

Marblemount about 1910. Note ferry at left.

*From the collection of Charles Dwelley*





prospectors came up-river by canoe to seek claims on the upper reaches of the Skagit and among the many mineral deposits high above the Cascade River. The name of Marblemount was brought down from an earlier trading post and post office at Marble Creek, where that kind of stone had been found. As the west bank of the Skagit was more convenient for travelers to both areas the town grew there. It is told that the first commercial enterprise at Marblemount was a tent saloon with a plank bar set between two barrels of whiskey.

From this primitive beginning a town began to form. The present Log Cabin Inn, built in 1889 by Jack Durand and Henry Martin some distance from the river, was moved near the river bank about 1898 to become a store operated by Paul Pressentin in partnership with his brother, Otto, Rockport merchant. Mrs. Matilda Buller arrived with her family that same year to build a hotel and set down the family roots in the area. "Sadie's Hotel," still standing, was built as a headquarters for a mining company and later made famous by the personality of Sadie Siverling Cudworth whose hospitality and table were remembered by prominent visitors from all parts of the country. Frank Pressentin was another hotel operator of the pioneer days, later setting up a general store.

Across the river William Barratt, who had homesteaded 120 acres in 1891, had developed a large ranch and built a large home, still standing, that served as the headquarters for miners, surveyors and developers during the years when railroads were seeking a crossing over Cascade Pass. The route also was considered for a state highway. Both failed to reach a satisfactory crossing route, the the highway was built toward the pass and a bridge built at Marblemount. The present North Cascade Highway passes through Marblemount, but the route now follows the Skagit River. The town retains much of the pioneer character and is a popular tourist attraction.

#### McMURRAY

Until the rail line which became the Northern Pacific was built Lake McMurray was accessible only by trail from Conway east over the hill. As the surveyors for the railway were marking out the route along the west side of the lake Dr. Marcus Kenyon platted a town site on the southwest edge of Lake McMurray. Before the rails were laid there were already hotel, store, and post office, and by the time the trains were running a mill had been built and the town was ready to go into



The Montborne Hotel, really a boarding house, in 1891. The center group of five people are: Joe Lagault, Albert Gilpin, Jane Gilpin, Lizza Lagault, and Assie Calkins (the young girl leaning against the post). Others are unidentified.

*Original from Effie Calkins*

business. After its founding in 1890 it suffered all the fluctuations to which a town devoted to logging and milling is subject, especially in 1893 and the years immediately following. It had its greatest days between 1896 and 1920 when the giant Atlas Shingle and Lumber Company was logging the hills, turning the timber into shingles and lumber, and shipping out its products to the far away markets which were made accessible by the rails. McMurray did not incorporate until about 1910 but long before that it had churches, Catholic, Congregational, and Episcopal, several lodges, and a school.

When the local supply of timber was gone the Atlas mill closed and the town became a quiet village in a magnificent setting beside a gem-like lake reflecting the mountains which rise above it to the east.

#### MONTBORNE

This town on the east shore of Big Lake had several mills at various times but never one of giant size. It had a railroad station on the line of the Northern Pacific, a general store, and a boarding

Montborne depot in 1902. Note the water barrels on the roof in case of fire.

*Original from Effie Calkins*





house-hotel. When the timber was gone Montborne became a residential community overlooking Big Lake.

## ROCKPORT

The site of Rockport had been homesteaded in 1885 by Leonard Graves who later moved to Edison but retained title to the land. Albert von Pressentin was operating a store at Sauk in the late 1890s when he overheard a conversation between two railroad surveyors which indicated that the line would end at a point on Graves' land. According to a family story he rode his horse all night to get to Edison in order to buy the Graves homestead before the news got out. When the railway reached the spot in 1901 he had a new hotel ready, built on a solid rock foundation, which he called the Rockport Hotel. It had 21 rooms, hot and cold running water, a dining room, and a bar, truly luxurious accommodations for such a remote spot. The town of Rockport grew slowly but within a few years it had a post office, school, shingle mills, lumber mill, saloon, barber shop, store, meat market, tailor shop, and a ferry across the river. There were three trains a day to Burlington, freight trains with a car for passengers. As the preliminary surveys began for electric power dams on the upper Skagit, Rockport was the center. Later when construction of the Seattle City Light actually began, the utility built its own line from

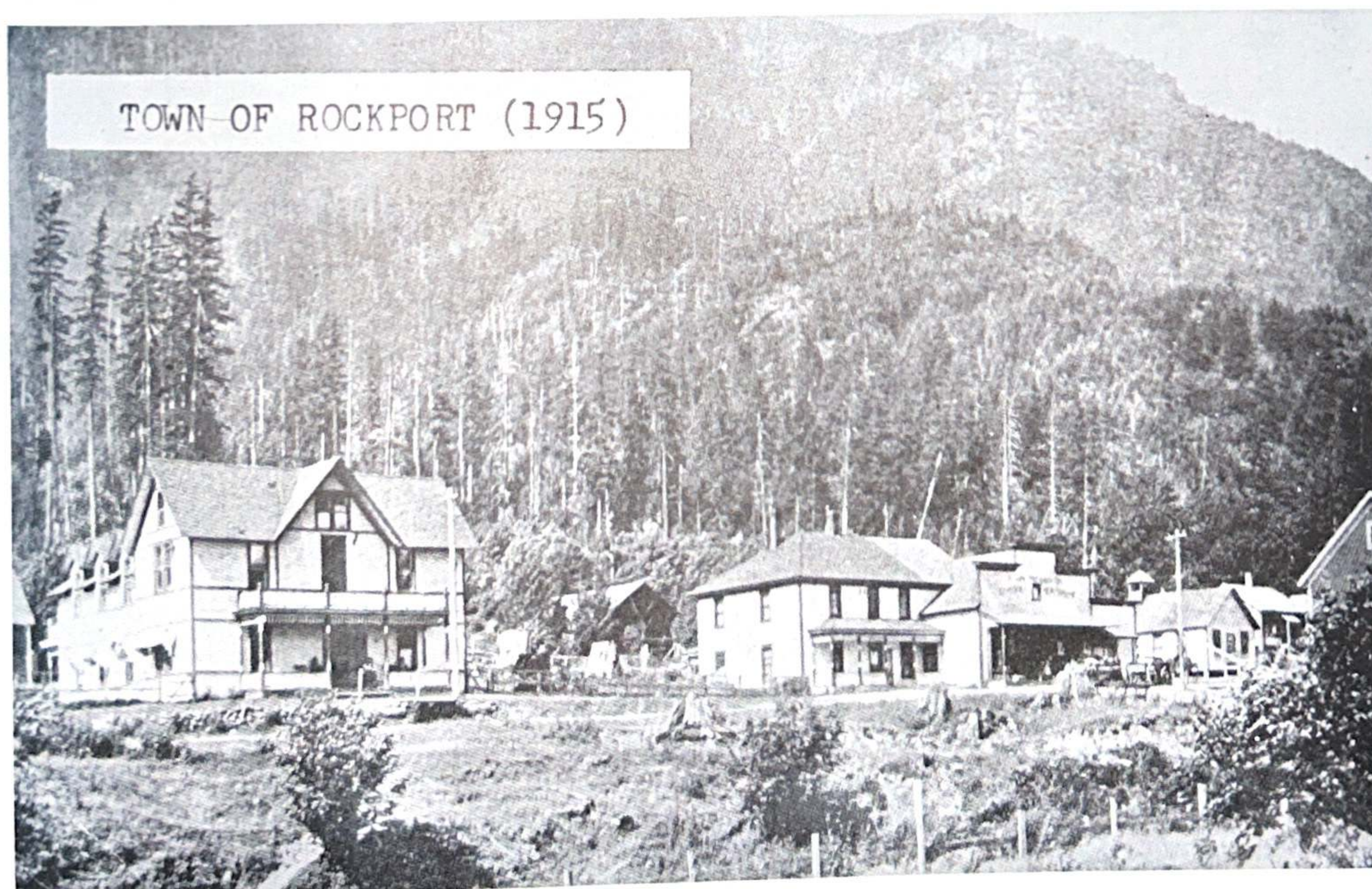
Rockport in 1915, reproduced from a postcard advertising the Rockport Hotel, H. Bauman, proprietor, as "The scenic



Mr. and Mrs. Albert von Pressentin who started the community of Rockport.

*Picture from Tom Benton*

spot for fishing, hunting, and mountain climbing."  
*From the collection of Charles Dwelley*





the end of the Great Northern at Rockport to its construction camp at Newhalem. Rockport remained the stopover for everyone going to or coming from Newhalem. Even after all the dams were finished the tours arranged by City Light brought people to Rockport until the improved roads began carrying tourists past without a stop.

Today Rockport is marked by a State Park. Magnificent virgin forests line both sides of the road as the traveler approaches the town from the west. There is a store on the highway but it is easy for tourists to pass through without realizing that there are many homes scattered over the hillside and that the old ferry has been preserved in a little park by the side of the Skagit River near the bridge.

#### SAMISH

The docks on Samish Island were the principal port of entry for the whole north mainland of Skagit County until the Great Northern built the cut-off which took it around the foot of the Chuckanut Mountains in 1902. The larger Sound steamers deposited freight and passengers on Samish Island to be transferred to small boats for

the trip up Edison slough. Small sternwheelers could dock at Edison at high tide but had to back out to deep water since they could not turn around. Samish began to lose its importance after the rise of Bow after 1902 and the improvement in roads after 1910. Today the island supports a large orchard of filberts, a little other agriculture, and a large number of summer and year-round homes.

#### SUMMIT PARK

The railroad to Anacortes established a station stop at the point where it cut through the high ground just south of March's Point. Summit Park was accessible from all directions on high, well drained roads. The church which was built there still stands and there are still homes near the railroad cut.

#### 6. THE TOWNS WHICH HAVE CONTINUED TO GROW

##### ANACORTES

"The Magic City" began its fantastic boom, described in the HISTORY OF SKAGIT AND SNOHOMISH COUNTIES and in CHECHACOS ALL, in 1890 and grew almost overnight from a collection of quiet neighboring settlements to a

The Huntoon Building at 6th and I Streets. Huntoon was part of the McNaught faction which wished to make I Avenue the main street of Anacortes. At the far right can be seen the brick Anacortes Hotel which stood on

8th Street. From the worn condition of the plank streets in the foreground it seems that this picture must date between 1905 and 1910.

*Picture from the collection of Wallie Funk*





The early 1900s in Anacortes.  
Note the horse at the left tied to a telephone pole, the hand-operated washing machine at center, and the wood-burning kitchen range in the cart.

*Original from  
William McCracken*



Commercial Avenue in Anacortes about 1910 before paving was begun. However the street already has cement sidewalks and drainage. The telephone poles were used as hitching posts.

*From the collection of  
Wallie Funk*

The Bank Building at 4th and Commercial in Anacortes, built during the boom days. The telephone office was upstairs in this building and between 1897 and 1902 Josephine Trulson was the operator of the first telephone. After 1906 there were two operators.

*Picture from the collection  
of Wallie Funk*







Curtis Wharf Company office around 1910. Standing, left to right: Fred Stafford, Melville Curtis, and Ed Baker. Seated woman not identified. The stove, safe, and telephone, as well as the style of dress mark the period in history.

Wallie Funk collection



Delmonico lunch counter and coffee house of Zack Benn in Anacortes, probably about 1910.

From the collection of Wallie Funk

Anacortes. Douglass Allmond in front of the offices of the water and light companies bought from the Oregon Improvement Company by a group of local citizens in 1902. Allmond became president.

From: Anacortes Museum of History and Art



small city of broad streets, brick buildings, and substantial homes. The collapse of the boom was a blow which was made more crushing by the loss of the battle to wrest the county seat from Mount Vernon and by the severity of the depression which started in 1893.

Business revived nationwide after 1896. Anacortes began during the 1890s to recover from its shattered dreams of becoming the major trans-Pacific port and in the process it discovered that there were promising realities in its location, particularly in relation to fishing and lumbering. Matheson's codfish plant, bringing the salted fish from the Bering Sea to be dried and packed in Anacortes, pioneered an industry which grew to enormous proportions as the Robinson plant joined the codfish business and a whole series of salmon canneries were built along Guemes Channel from near the foot of Commercial to Ship's Harbor. During the same period the shingle mills, lumber mills, and a box factory flourished on Fidalgo Bay from near Weaverling Spit to Cap Sante and around the point on the Channel. Business firms began filling up the substantial downtown buildings which had been vacant since 1892, moving some of them to make a more compact central district. A new company of local men took over the water and electric plants from the Oregon Improvement Company about 1900. The Fourth of July celebrations continued to attract visitors from far and near. New schools were built and the high school grew and gained accreditation. The badly worn planked streets were replaced by asphalt after 1912. A Carnegie Library was established. The town had an efficient fire department and was remarkably free from the disastrous fires



# The Burlington Journal

THE Burlington Journal was established on June 1, 1899, by H. L. Bowmer, who recognized the central position of Burlington with regard to railroad accommodation by the Great Northern company and its advantages as a shipping and trading point for the vast agricultural community surrounding. From a small 8-column paper The Journal has increased to a 24-column representative newspaper and takes especial interest in local events and aiding in the growth and upbuilding of Burlington.

In June, 1902, Mr. Bowmer entered into co-partnership with I. J. Howe of Nebraska, in the real estate business in connection with the newspaper, and this firm takes pleasure in giving any desired information regarding Skagit county and opportunities for investment. Messrs. Bowmer & Howe have a large list of improved and unimproved lands, and are also agents for the Burlington Townsite company, who have for sale choice business locations, residence lots, etc., at a very low figure and on terms within reach of all.



Newspaper office of the Burlington Journal, started in 1899. Picture was made around 1902 when the newly

incorporated town was trying to attract newcomers.  
Reproduced for the Ronald Holtum collection from  
Sebring's SKAGIT COUNTY ILLUSTRATED

which plagued most of the towns of the county. When the sinking of freighters by German submarines in World War I created the need for rapid construction of new ships Sloan Shipyards built ways on Guemes Island and for a time Anacortes was a thriving shipbuilding center.

The Armistice of November 11, 1918, brought the cancellation of war contracts and caused hard times in Anacortes as the shipbuilding vanished and the lumber and fishing industries diminished. In 1920, however, it was on much more solid ground than it had been in 1892-93 when the railway boom collapsed.

## BURLINGTON

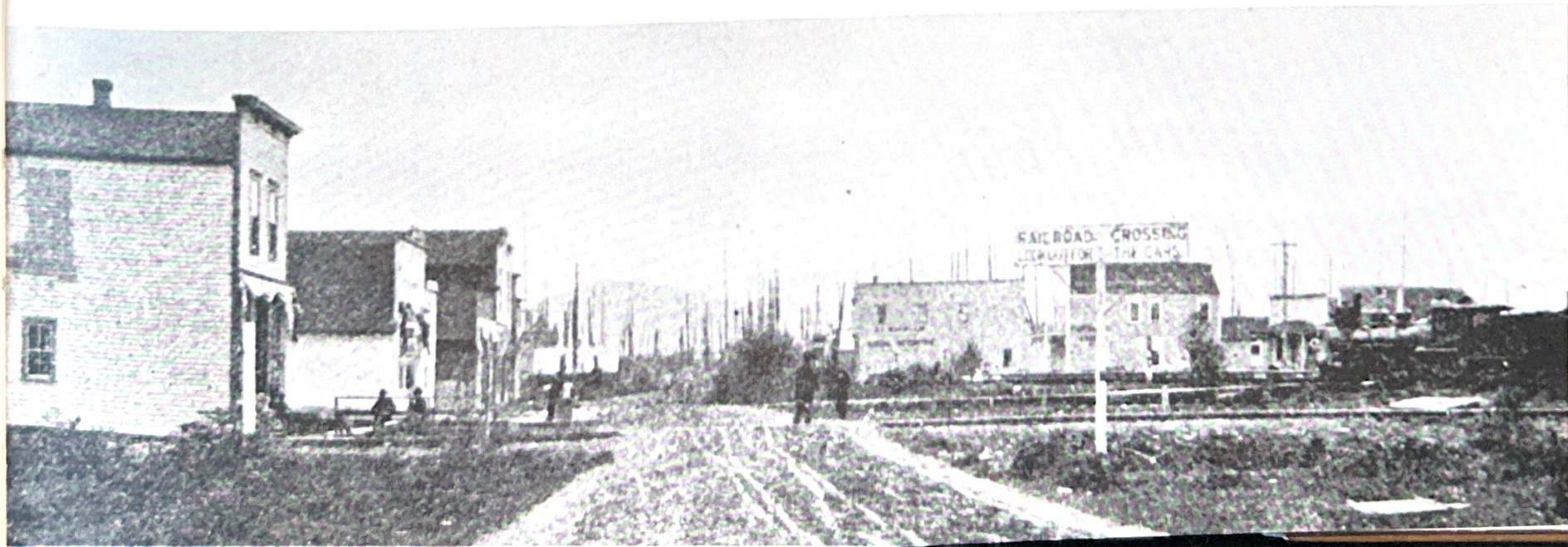
Burlington is the only one of the four major towns of the county which never had water transportation. For that reason it started later than the others. William McKay had some difficulty logging his timber claim there because of the distance from the river; the first logging "railroad" in the county was the one he built, using maple rails and cars drawn by animals to get the logs to water. The

site of Burlington had been logged off but not cleared when the railroads came through in 1890 and 1891. The town was platted in a regular grid before the first building was erected. The depot, placed at the crossing of the east-west and north-south lines, was a small structure which later proved inadequate for the business of a junction point. Belleville, a few miles north along the rail line, had not grown as expected, so one night around 1900 the Great Northern workmen loaded the Belleville station on a flat car and transferred it to Burlington—local citizens in both places rubbed their eyes in disbelief when they looked out in the morning.

Burlington grew rapidly in 1890 and 1891, gaining a business district, a shingle mill, many homes, and a Methodist church. Though it was not yet incorporated as a town it joined the fight in 1891 when Sedro Woolley and Anacortes tried to wrest the county seat from Mount Vernon, an attempt which failed because the three of them split the anti-Mount Vernon vote and no one of

Burlington street scene looking east from just west of the Great Northern tracks in 1900. The sign in right

foreground reads, "Railroad Crossing—Look Out for Cars."  
From Ronald Holtum collection. Reproduced from  
Sebring's SKAGIT COUNTY ILLUSTRATED, 1903.







*Reproduced for the Ronald Holtum collection from  
Sebring's SKAGIT COUNTY ILLUSTRATED, 1903*

them gained the three-fifths necessary to move the county government. Burlington incorporated in 1902.

After 1912 Burlington was also the point where the Interurban branch line to Sedro Woolley connected with the main line between Mount Vernon and Bellingham. In 1911 the town was a drawing card for another reason. In local option elections rural Skagit County and Mount Vernon had gone dry. The central location of Burlington at the crossing of transportation lines made it the oasis for the thirsty from the desert lands as well as a weekend haven for men from the woods and the mills. The Burlington City Council put an end to this by refusing to license saloons in 1912. The liquor interests sued, maintaining that the citizens had voted wet, but the judge sustained the powers of the council.

Burlington had the distinction of being the working location for a doctor, justly famous over a wide area, Dr. H. E. Cleveland. He established the Cleveland Clinic and saw that the Burlington Hospital maintained the highest standards.

The town of Burlington has grown steadily without booms or busts. The rich farms surrounding it added to its business importance.

#### MOUNT VERNON

Founded as a river trading post in 1877, Mount Vernon based its early growth on the traffic of the steamers and canoes which brought settlers, carried their supplies, outfitted prospectors and miners, and bore to market whatever saleable

products the locality had to offer. Many settlers had located along the river above and below the log jams before they were cut, enabling traffic to reach the store of Clothier and English around which the town grew. It was the unexpected numbers of these settlers which startled and dismayed the old town of LaConner when Mount Vernon snatched the county seat in the election of 1884 after Skagit had separated from Whatcom.

The business district of the town faced the river along Front Street while the steamers docked on the west side of the street. A block east lay Main Street. The first plat of the town had laid it out with broad streets but for some reason it was never filed; the second plat placed lots along the narrow streets which have been the bane of the town's existence ever since. A great fire in 1891 destroyed the stores and hotels along the waterfront. As the railway tracks were being laid into town in that year and as the river bank was eroding, the rebuilt town centered on First Street with Main Street to the west and Second and Third Streets to the east as the secondary areas. In the ensuing years Front Street washed away entirely as did much of the west side of Main Street. Heroic efforts finally stabilized the river bank and protected it by a revetment after piling failed. In the process the town turned its back on the Skagit and abandoned its banks to condensers, canneries, mills, tie-sheds for the farmers' horses, and later parking for shoppers' cars.

The building of the bridge across the Skagit





First Street in Mount Vernon about 1900, looking north from Kincaid. Behind the picket fence on the right was the Captain Decatur residence. The brick building in the right foreground is the Skagit County Courthouse, built in 1893 after the second county seat battle allowed Mount Vernon to retain it against the assault of Sedro Woolley and Anacortes.

*From the collection of P. H. Dunlap*

in 1893, the improvement of roads in all directions, and the transformation of logged-off lands into fertile farms made Mount Vernon an increasingly important market town for the Skagit flats, slowly taking business away from LaConner and rapidly displacing Skagit City and Avon. The first court house was built in 1893 — remodeled, it still stands as the Matheson building. Much legal business came because of the court house. There were mills for many years. But basically bankers and businessmen in town were as concerned about the weather and the state of the crops on the flats as any farmer. The growth of the town was slow but steady.

#### SEDRO WOOLLEY

The oft-told story of the town of Sedro on the

Corner of First and Myrtle Streets in Mount Vernon. The picture was marked "1906" but from internal evidence it seems closer to 1910. The concrete sidewalks, street light, fire hydrant, and drinking fountain all indicate the later date.

*Gift of Lorna Liggett Mattson*



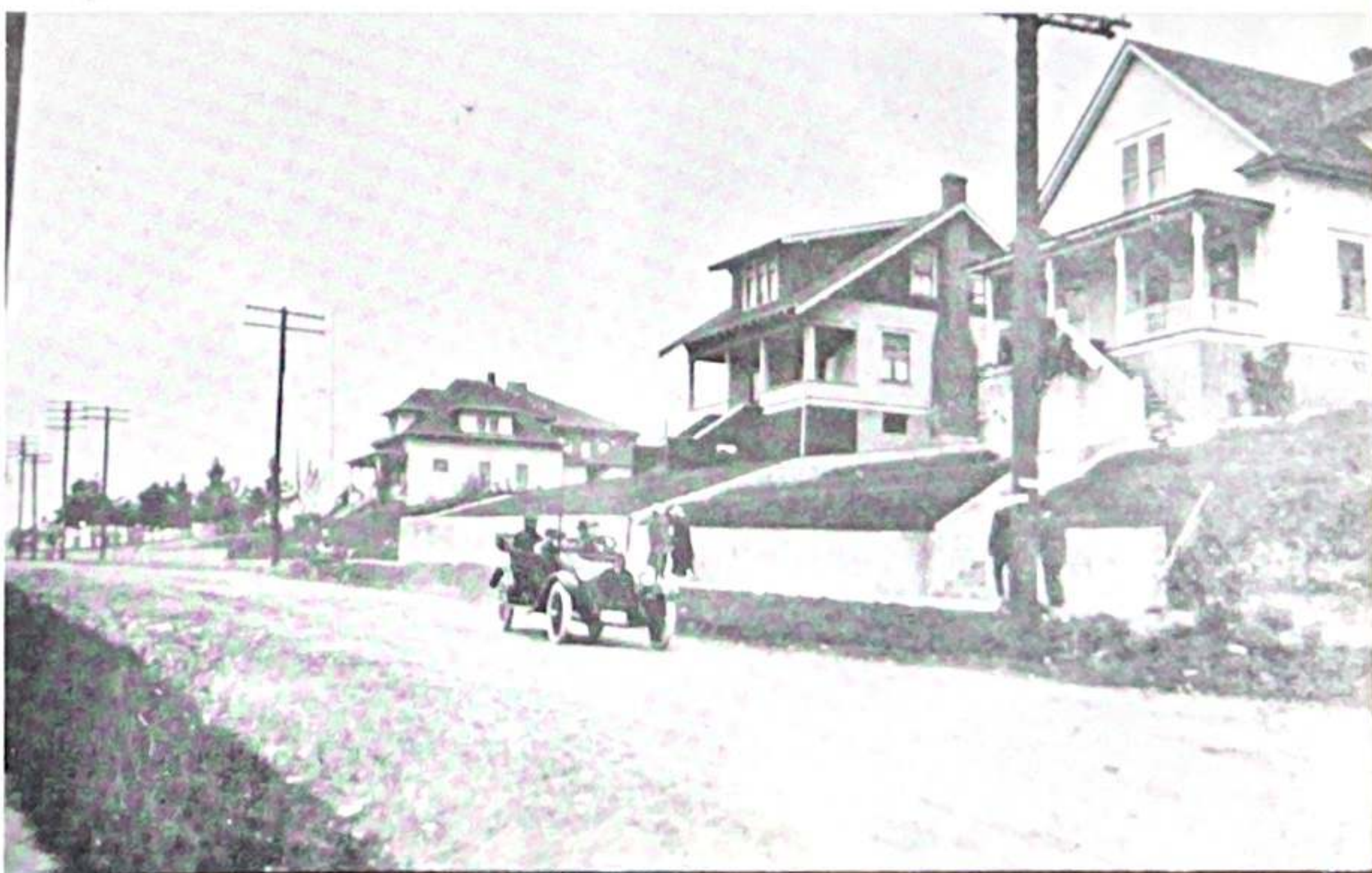
First Street in Mount Vernon about 1920, looking north from Kincaid Street. Something about the lens used fore-shortens the distance as the markers down the street are in the middle of each intersection. "Penrod" was a play coming to the Opera House, either put on by the high school or a traveling company.

*Picture from collection of Evelyn Lindfors Roach*

river and of Woolley on the railroads will not be detailed here. Enough to say that they were close neighbors and bitter rivals until common sense prevailed and they united in 1898 to become Sedro-Woolley. (The hyphen still lingers but is being used less frequently.) Since the building of the railways the town has always been the gateway to the upper Skagit area and to the rich agricultural and lumber area along the chain of lakes to the south and the valleys to the north. It became the terminus of a branch interurban line in 1912, gaining as a result the first concrete pavement in the county, the Dollar Way. The Sedro Woolley Iron Works which later became Skagit Steel gave the town an industrial base; the Bennett mines at Cokedale added to it. Shingle and lumber mills

Fourth Street just above the viaduct in Mount Vernon. The brick school building (Roosevelt), a corner of which shows behind the house just above the car, housed the high school from 1907 to January, 1922, with elementary grades in the downstairs rooms. In 1923 it became entirely an elementary school and was used for that purpose until 1971 when it became the administrative building for the school system.

*Picture from John Locken*







Sedro Woolley, looking south on Metcalf Street. Picture was on a postcard postmarked 1910. Note the broad

concrete sidewalks even though the street is still mud. Paved streets were not far off.

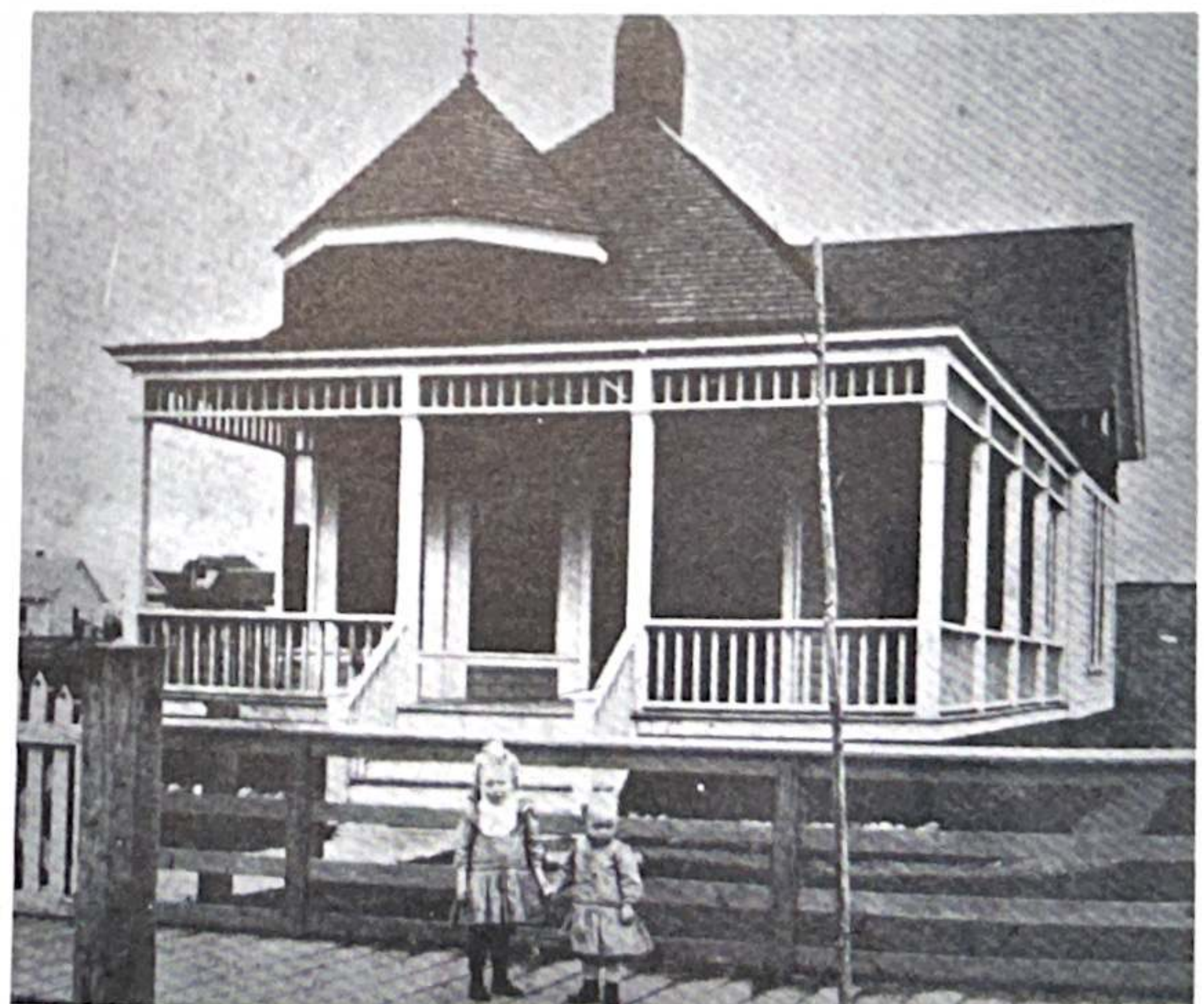
*Original from Effie Calkins*

grew naturally at a center so accessible to timber, to transportation, and to markets. Camps and mills purchased supplies in Sedro Woolley. Booms of logs, made up near Sedro, were towed by the Black Prince to Anacortes or other Sound points. From the outlying mills and camps the loggers and mill-hands made the town their Mecca for weekend relaxation. Its Fourth of July celebrations were famous and carnivals and circuses drew large crowds. Even the 1914 bank robbery was almost a carnival. The Loggerodeo is its current annual attraction.

The prosperity of Sedro Woolley has always fluctuated with the state of the lumber and logging economy but it is diversified enough by local industry and agriculture to level off the cycles somewhat. Darius Kinsey, the nationally famous photographer, immortalized the many aspects of getting out the timber. Two of the sides of many-faceted Sedro Woolley come together in Kinsey who spent most of his time in the rough atmosphere of the logging camps but devoted every Sunday to church and Sunday School.

Serious fires in Woolley occurred in 1891 and 1893 but the enlarged city brought excellent city water down from the mountains south of the river in 1902 and since then has had only the fires which are inevitable in towns built mainly of wood.

Around 1900 it got an electric light plant, established a four-year high school, and built an Opera House which was only demolished in 1972. The decline of nearby lumbering activities and the closing of the Cokedale mines have slowed Sedro Woolley's growth, but the advantages of its location and the diversification of its activities have kept it on a fairly steady course.



The J. C. LaPlant residence at 5th and Talcott in Sedro Woolley. The children are Lawrence and Porter LaPlant. Picture from Ruth LaPlant



## Chapter IV

# RISE AND DECLINE OF THE COUNTRY SCHOOL

From 1890 to 1920 was the flowering time of the country school, the pride of parents, children, and teachers, and the total formal education for a majority of those who grew up in that period. So great was the loyalty of patrons that many of the small schools lingered on for years after consolidation seemed irresistible. The formation of large union districts was well under way by 1920 but the Rosario and Fidalgo schools did not join Anacortes until 1957 and Conway has continued to remain outside all high school districts and to retain its own elementary school until the present.

Neighborhood schools were very literally the creation of each local community which, as soon as there were families with children, felt the need, started a school, and then put it on a continuing basis by organizing a district, choosing board members, and voting taxes for a building. Sometimes the money was used only for materials and the citizens constructed the school house themselves. The board hired a teacher for as many months of the year as it was possible to keep the school open under local conditions. After statehood in 1889 existing school districts were reorganized and re-

numbered so there is some confusion between the numbering of the territorial districts and those in the state system but the pattern persisted.

One district will serve as illustration. The original building of the Rosario school belongs to the Skagit County Historical Society and will eventually be restored as a museum exhibit, so it is worthwhile to sketch its history which was similar to that of a great many others. On December 2, 1889 the school began its first session in the Robert Sharpe home with Lee Byles as teacher at \$40.00 per month for a three-month term which ended February 21, 1890. A meeting of the 45 legal voters in the district was held in July to pass a bond issue of \$1,500 to buy a site and to build and furnish a school house; the amount to be borrowed was later raised to \$2,000. Bonds were sold to "New York parties" at 9 per cent interest, 10 bonds of \$200 each. The first school census taken about the same time showed 19 boys and 12 girls of school age.

On November 1, 1890, Sam Best, one of the directors, offered to give an acre of land as long as it was used for school purposes but the other

Bay View School in 1893. Kate Stearns, later Mrs. McCullough, is 8th from the left in the front row. Others are unidentified.

*Picture from Dorothy McCullough Rydberg*



The Sterling School about 1890. Pupils and teacher not identified.

*Picture from Jess Knutzen*







Wilbur School in 1882 located on the Kragnes farm 1-1/2 miles north of Conway on the Dike Road. The boy at the left sitting on the ground with his hand to his face is Peter Lee. Boy standing last on right with flower is Willie Waldon. Girl in white standing on right is Nellie I. P. Lee. Teacher is Agnes Peck. Others in picture but not identified are: Mary Ann Lisk, Billy Lisk, John Abbott, Phillip Beck, Dave Wilbur, John Wilson, Charlie Villeneuve, Benny Villeneuve, Ida Villeneuve, Alice Wilson, Ellen Wilson, Jim Wilson.

*From collection of  
Ronald Holtum*



Rosario School in the early 1900s. This picture seems to have been taken after the second story was removed about 1910. The building now belongs to the Skagit County Historical Society and will eventually be restored on the inside to show what a one-room country school was like.

*Picture from Helen Savage Sharpe*

The Rosario School after the second floor had been removed and the roof lowered.

*Picture from Kathleen Ervine Sharpe*



directors, Tom Sharpe and G. Goodier, decided it was better to buy it at a price set by a referee, \$150. On November 3, 1890, a contract was signed with Trenholm and Black to build a two-room and two-story school house for \$1,465. It was completed and the downstairs room furnished by March 19, 1891, and school opened for a five-month term with Mrs. Loughlin as teacher. Children from the following families attended: S. Ginnett, W. Halpin, A. B. Williams, Isaac Taylor, Tom Sharpe, G. Goodier, T. Giles, Columbus Best, C. Haroldson and Sam Best. The upper story was intended for a lodge meeting room and a community center but it was never used.

About 1910 one family refused to send children to school for fear the two-story building would blow over in a high wind. Since the pupils could all be accommodated in the one ground-floor room Blaine Giles and Wallace Sharpe, former pupils and now directors, with the help of Sam Giles and Charlie Livingston, lowered the roof to make it a one-story building, doing the work gratis in about three weeks. The Rosario district which had the lowest assessed valuation in the county always voted special levies to run the school and also supported it with various donated services such as free firewood. One teacher, Edith Trafton, with the help of the young people in the neighborhood, gave basket socials to raise money to buy the clock, organ, and stage curtain. The highlights of the year were the Christmas program and the school picnic, attended by practically everyone in the district.

By 1900 the towns generally had larger schools





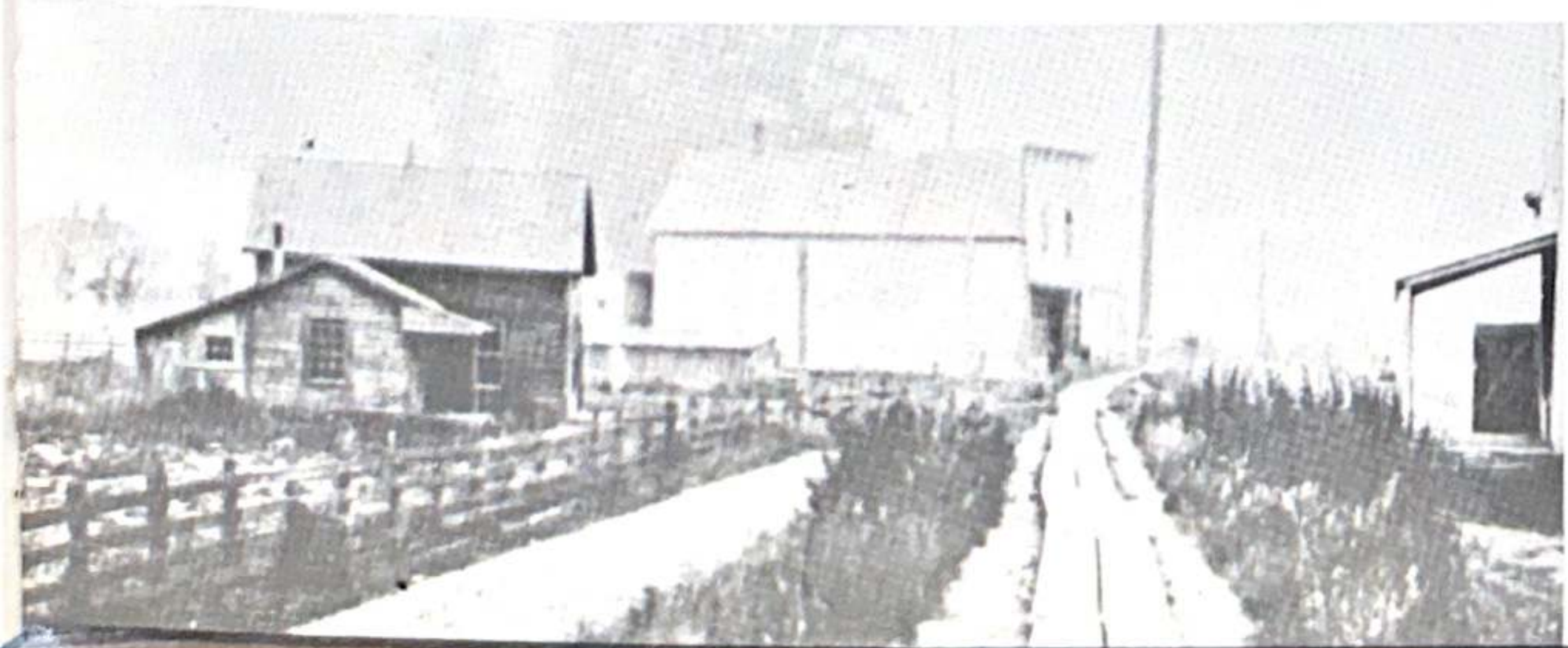
Marblemount School as it looked during the first two decades of the 20th century—one room, eight grades, cedar slab benches and desks, school for only the three summer months. The building was later moved and is now part of the Marblemount post office.

*Picture from Iola Bazinet*

with each grade in a separate room, or at most two grades together, but the one or two room school with all eight grades was still the rural norm for a very good reason. Most pupils walked to school and two or three miles over the bad roads or through the woods by trail was as far as small children could manage by themselves. Often school had to be suspended during the months of the worst weather. Families which lived in remote areas, too far from others to start a school, had the choice of having the children go without schooling entirely or moving into town for the winter, as Lucinda Davis did while her children were young and the family was living on the Davis Ranch at Cedar Bar far above Marblemount. The pupils from the settlement at Hoogdal made a seven-mile round trip to get to the school at Belfast in 1910. From 1911 to 1914 they attended the new Hickson school which was only a three-mile round trip over an old logging road, but a very steep and dangerous three miles. Not until 1914 did they get a community school. Mrs. Peter Larsen near Sauk worried about education for her sons in 1890 when she pioneered the upper Skagit with her husband. The boys had begun school in Tacoma and at Sauk they could only go from May to September when the trails were passable; their dog went with them on their long walk to give some protection from bears and cougars. At Concrete in 1910 Mary Parks rode her horse three miles to school through

The board walk at Fir which helped children get to school in spite of mud.

*From the Owen Tronsdal collection*



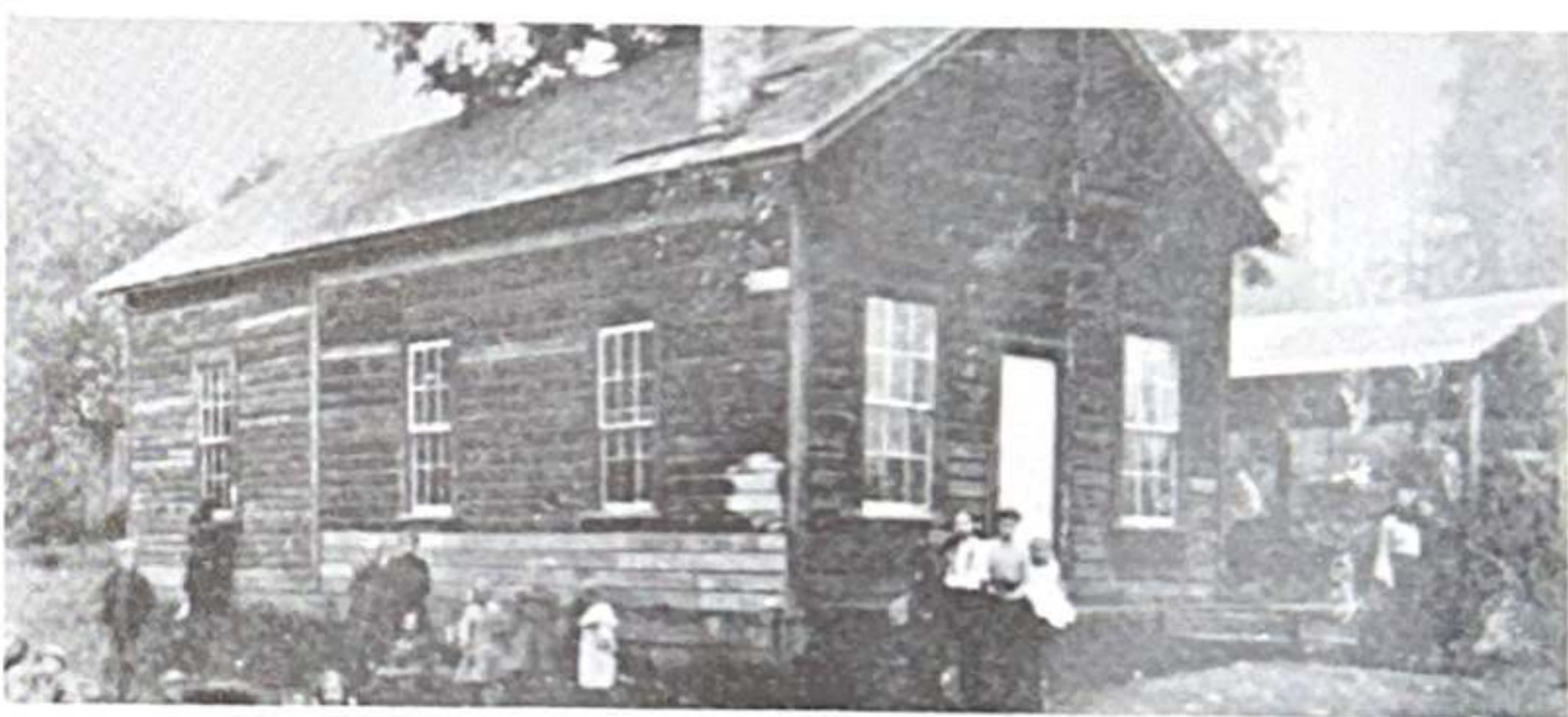
Sauk. In 1910 Mary Parks (later Mrs. Niels Larsen) rode this horse three miles to school every day through the woods.

*Picture from Mary Parks Larsen*



Lookout School (later Alger) about 1900. Teacher and pupils are not identified. Fir tree in the foreground was nine feet in diameter and 280 feet tall. The school is built of logs.

*Picture from the Abbey family*



Conway School, taught by A. F. Benthien in 1904-5. The founder of Conway, Tom Jones, named it for Conway in Wales.

*Picture from Leone Currie Benthien*



Pupils at Milltown School lined up under umbrellas on a wet day in the school year 1904-5.

*Picture from Leone Currie Benthien*

Field School in 1900. The teacher is Miss Shidler. The girls in the middle of the front row are Thelma Hall and two Krantz sisters, and the one in the middle of the back row is Dorothy Worline. Others are unidentified.

*Skagit County Historical Museum*





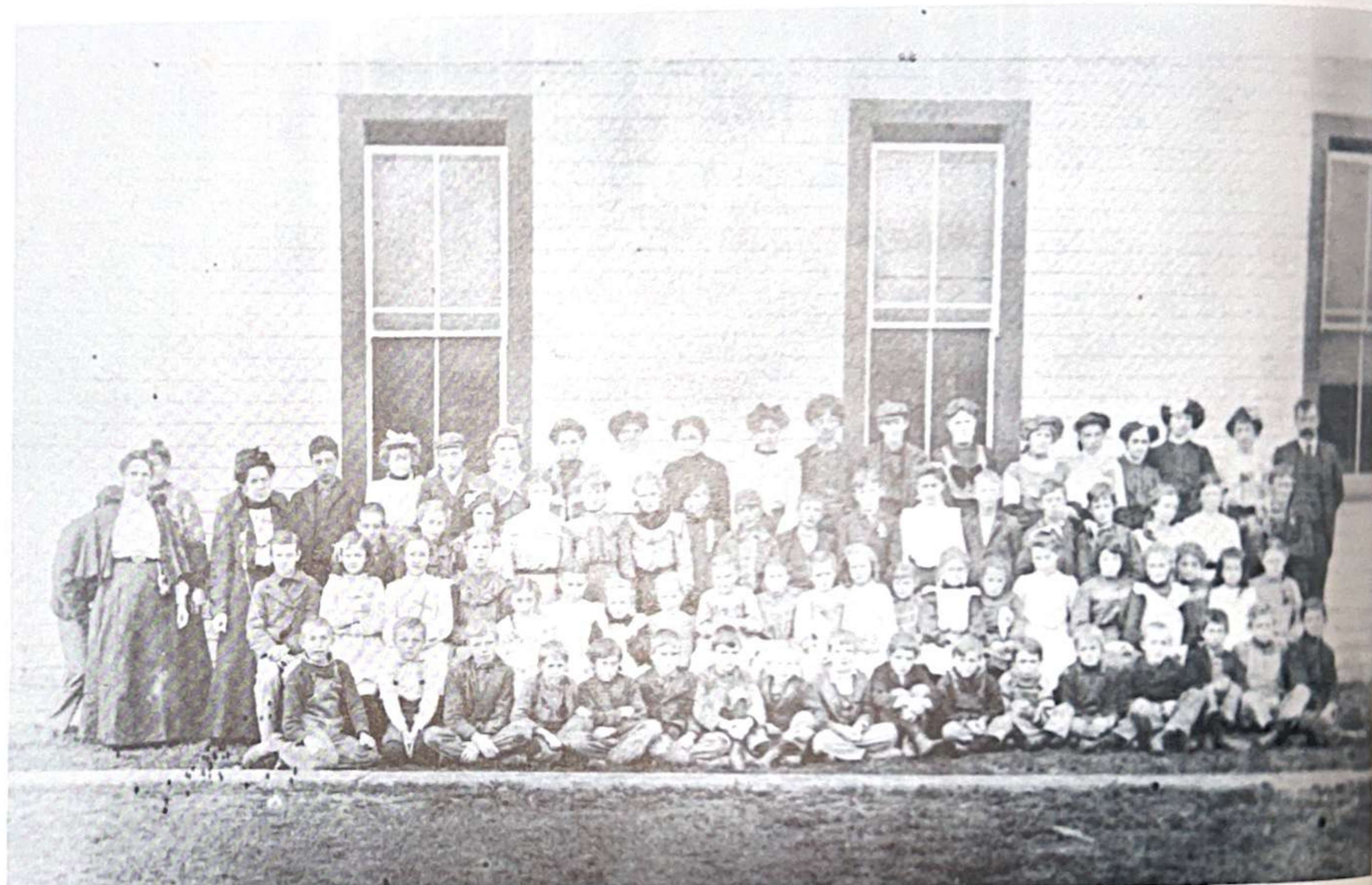


Fir School in 1893 or 1894. Left side, bottom row, l to r: 1, Frank Pryor; 2, Ella Good Gordon; 3, Peter Kvande; 4, Etta Good Brunsell; 5, Elmer Swanson; 6, Minnie Olson Utgard. Second row, left side, l to r: 1, Robert Hanstad; 2, Edw. Good; 3, William Olson; 4, Leo Olson; 5, Hans Hanstad. Top row, left, l to r: 1, William T. Good; 2, Otto Anderson; 3, Tommy Gates; 4, William Hayton. On steps, bottom row, l to r: 1, Mamie Pearson; 2, Alvina Crogstad; 3, Emma Crogstad; 4, Carol Olson Swanson; 5, Jennie Mauseh Sund; 6, Emma Peterson; 7, Elmer Johnson. Second row on steps, l to r: 1, Celia Pryor Good; 2, Ella Lonke; 3, unidentified; 4, Annie Kvande Mauseh; 5, Ragna Kvande Holmes; 6, Mary Peterson. Top row on steps, l to r: 1, Cora Hayton Polson; 2, Annie Peterson; 3, Emma Pryor Hayton; 4, Jennie Sande Teho; 5, Zula Ball; 6, Maude Good Hayton. Right side, bottom row, l to r: 1, Gertie Sande Sandness; 2, Unidentified; 3, unidentified; 4, Charles E. T. Olson; 5, Fred Mahlim. Second row on right, l to r: 1, Olaf Holt; 2, Ed Lonke; 3, Arthur Good; 4, Fred Mahlim. Top row, right side, l to r: 1, John Hanstad; 2, ..... Jensen; 3, Arthur Johnson; 4, "Red" Ed Good. Teachers: Mr. Gilkey and unidentified woman.

*Picture from Ragna Moore*

Bay View School in 1902. Kate Stearns McCullough, the teacher, is standing second from the left. There seem to be at least two other teachers in the picture but they are not identified.

*Picture from  
Dorothy McCullough Rydberg*



The Lee School in 1891, located at west end of Stackpole Road. District No. 3. Teacher, Mrs. M. G. Laughlin. Children shown in picture, but not identified as to order: 1, Wallie Stevens; 2, Frank Esgroves; 3, Orlin Washburn; 4, Martha Anderson; 5, Bert Moores; 6, Annie Gidlund; 7, Fannie Anderson; 8, Minnie McElreath; 9, Marion Wilson; 10, Frank Gage; 11, George Gage; 12, Maude Gage; 13, Edith Gage; 14, Louisa Mills; 15, Mina Mills; 16, Mabel Anderson; 17, Fannie Washburn; 18, Alma Gidlund; 19, Oscar Magnuson; 20, Billie Magnuson; 21, Nellie I. P. Lee; 22, Peter Lee; 23, Frank Anderson; 24, Earl McClemons; 25, Dwight Wrightman; 26, Henry Johnson; 27, Charlie Longfellow; 28, Golden Willow.

*Picture Ronald Holtum collection*





the timber and along the river — it was safer for a little girl to ride a docile pony than to walk.

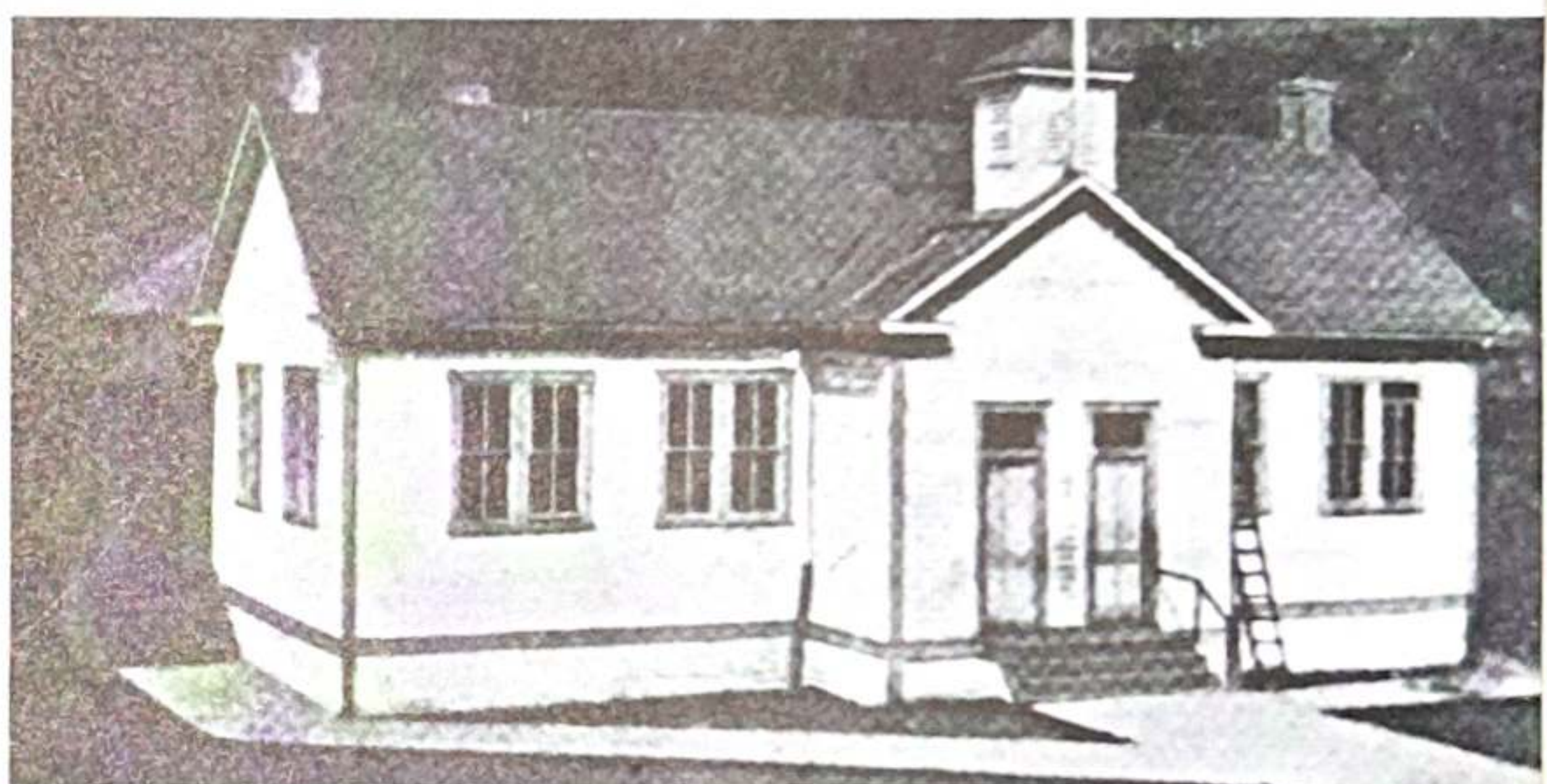
How much education did children get in such schools? With eight grades or even four in one room the teacher could not have much time with any one pupil. There was a recitation bench in front of the teacher's desk to which groups of children came in turn while the rest were supposed to be studying. There were no books except texts, paper was limited, maps and charts were rare, reference books were seldom available. Children were as full of energy and unconventional ideas as they always have been everywhere.

There are reports to show that some country schoolrooms were bedlam but that did not seem to be true of the majority. In most, children learned from each other as well as from texts and from the teacher. They took responsibilities around the school, carrying in wood and stoking the stove, ringing the bell, cleaning the erasers if there was a blackboard, bringing in a pail of drinking water (everyone drank from the same tin cup hanging on the side). They all brought lunches in a lard pail or a tobacco can and they worked off a great deal of energy on the playground — and sometimes got into fights. But the school was *their* school. The teacher knew the parents as well as the sons and daughters and the parents knew the teacher. There was a personal relationship between teacher and pupils and among the students themselves which large schools of a later day try to approximate by guidance counselors, clubs, and activities. If the knowledge which children gained in schools was limited, as it must have been, they



Sauk. The teachers' cottage in 1911-12 when Mr. and Mrs. Sickle were the teachers.

*Picture from Mary Parks Larsen*



Clear Lake School about 1910.

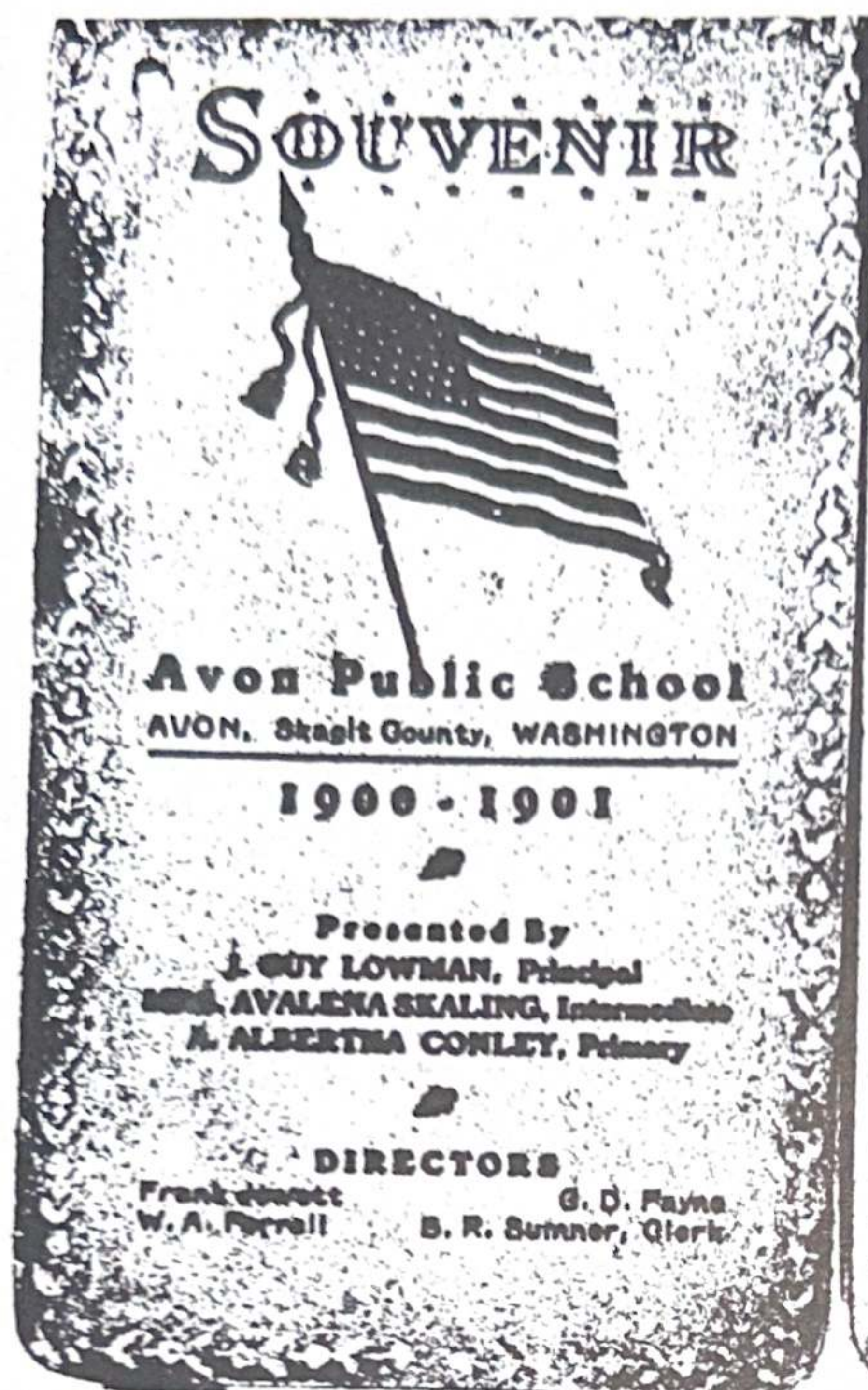
*Picture from Effie Calkins*



Skagit City School in 1907. Front row, l to r: 1, Phil Iverson; 2, H. B. Lee; 3; 4, Harold Swanberg; 5, Reynold Peterson; 6, Albert Salberg; 7, Ralph Martinson; 8; 9, Walter Nelson; 10, Hannah Feilstad; 11, Hildur Salberg; 12, Florence Nelson; 13, Edith Bylund; 14, Ruby Larson; 15, Julius Moa; 16, Andrew Edler; 17; 18, Harry Hansen; 19, Eric Enquist; 20; 21, Ellen Martinson; 22, Stella Moa. Middle row: 1, Effie McLean; 2; 3, Agnes Bylund; 4, Sarah Moa; 5, Myrtle Martinson; 6; 7, Willard Nelson; 8, Amanda Feilstad; 9; 10, Petra Iverson; 11, Beatrice Lee; 12, Hildur Larson; 13; 14, Dan McLean; 15, Reuben Asp; 16, Eric Bylund; 17, a teacher. Back row: 1; 2; 3, Mr. Dilling, teacher; 4; 5; 6, Edwin Salberg; 7, Albert Gerriets; 8, Elmer Larson; 9, Hulda Nelson; 10, Sofie Salberg; 11, Minnie Gerriets; 12, Aurora Hegstrom; 13, Nora Hansen; 14, Nora Larson; 15, Pearl Enquist; 16, Olga Larson; 17, Nellie Lange; 18, Moa (girl); 19, Ruth Martinson.

*Picture from Ronald Holtum collection*





## Pupils.

### PRINCIPAL'S ROOM.

Becky Becraft	Frankie Blair
Ina Blair	Viola Eddy
Mary Herrle	Bessie Hopper
Della Hunter	Edith Jewett
Bessie McClimans	Edith Mittelstead
Amelia Noble	Elva Noble
Edna Skaling	Lucy Smith
Gertrude Wagner	Hannah Isaacson
Esther Olson	Laura Eldred
Bessie Benson	Nellie Morris
Lizzie Mackey	Mary Mackey
Pearl Wiles	Roxy Thibert
George Eddy	Ernest Eubank
George Eubank	Ashton Graham
Ray Harmon	Forest Hunter
Roland Lalonde	Earl McClimans
Clifton Skaling	Percy Skaling
Fred Stafford	Clifford Wiles
Edward Wiles	Newton Milton
Allen Eldred	Gust Amskold
Charley Berggren	Percy Smith
Bennie Becraft	Emil Herrle
John Herrle	John Walker
Claude Robertson	Guy Utley

## Pupils.

### PRIMARY ROOM.

Emma Antenen	Ida Antenen
Hatty Amskold	Maude Bennett
Ruth Becraft	Pearl Curry
Nellie Eubank	Hazel Eubank
Esther Eddy	Bessie Hunter
Lucy Hopper	Armena Herrle
Nellie Murray	Lily Marsh
Ruby McAllister	Mabel Randall
Doris Sumner	Rosa Singer
Gertie Smith	Anna Smith
Polly Wiles	Ruth Wilson
Mabel Tingley	Charlotte Noble
Ethel Mayes	Phoebe Bozarth
Edna Jewett	Eben Bennett
Edgar Cameron	Bruce Cameron
Alfred Dannemiller	Paul Dannemiller
Harry Hall	Arthur Isaacson
Roy Jewett	Edward Jarvis
Harry Minneker	James Ovenell
Clare Pogue	Dean Pogue
David Shrum	Roy Tingley
Carlton Sumner	Boyd Wilson
Willie Walker	Verble Ferrell
Bruce Ferrell	Don Harmon
Dean Mayes	Henry Berggren
Willie Berggren	Paul Kevan
Laurence Hall	Ben Jewett

Puget Stafford

WEDDINGTON CO., DANVILLE, N. Y.

## Pupils.

### INTERMEDIATE ROOM.

Edward Walker	Henry Skaling
Philip Murray	Harry Mittelstead
Jack Whitney	Harry Randall
Claude Jewett	Eugene Hopper
Willie Singer	George Rupert
Jay Castle	George Marsh
Willie Thibert	Just Hawn
Herbert Tingley	James McLachlan
John Thibert	Harry Olson
Gust Olson	Claude Maze
Glenna Osgoodby	Rachel Becraft
Ethel Bennett	Maud Curry
Bessie Wiles	Grace Sumner
Susie Hopper	Rena Herrle
Winnifred Peck	Abbie Harmon
Nettie Hunter	Olive Randall
Bertha Ovenall	Reta Skaling
Mabel Christianson	Anna Isaacson
Olive Hobson	Lillian Stolberg
Esther Stolberg	Goldie Jewett
Edith Whitney	Charley Thibert

Souvenir Program of 1901-2 from the Avon School which then had three rooms, the top one of which included the

9th grade.

Program from Charles Stafford





Avon School in 1901. The Souvenir Program lists the pupils and teachers shown in this picture but does not

identify individuals.

*Picture from Harold Abbott*

Bay View School about 1903. Front row, l to r: 1, Bud Millard; 2, Earl Rogers; 3, Harvey Sorenson; 4, Wayne Lester; 5, Don Gorton; 6, Fred Breazeale; 7, Leo Price; 8, Stubby Millard; 9, Edward Irons; 10, Willie Millard; 11, Anton Williamson; 12, George Grandy; 13, Ora Garletts; 14, Charles Jorgenson; 15, Roy Peth; 16, Mark Frank; 17, Russell Byron. Second row: 1, Henry Irons; 2, Nellie Daniels; 3, Claudia Stearns; 4, Adeline Fawcett; 5, Mable Grandy; 6, Hattie Irons; 7, Leta Lane; 8, Pearl McMillan; 9, Abbie Rogers; 10; 11, Pearl Walker; 12, Daniels; 13, Vera Lester; 14, Greta Dickey; 15, Nona Walker; 16, Aletha Williamson; 17, Ruth Garletts; 18, Pearl Christianson; 19, Lela Garletts; 20, Ruth Thompson;

21, Emma Greene. Third row: 1, Willard Finch; 2, Ray Stearns; 3; 4, Pearl Finch; 5, Irene Crumrine; 6, Mabel Christianson; 7, Albert Christianson; 8, Francis Lester; 9, Walter Greene; 10, Leonard Barr; 11, Daisy Marihugh; 12, Martin Schmidt; 13, Andrew Schmidt; 14, Grover Walker; 15, Hazel Handy; 16, Bea Finch; 17, Noel Thompson. Fourth row: 1, Mrs. T. H. Look; 2, Miss Kate Stearns (Mrs. Chas. McCullough); 3, Henry Thompson; 4, Jane Lane; 5, Nels Jorgensen; 6, Letty Frank; 7, Bessie Greene; 8, Corda Price; 9, Veva Frank; 10, Grace Sorenson; 11, Fred Crumrine; 12, Bill Barr; 13, Effie McMillen; 14, Myrtle Stearns; 15, Hilda Jorgenson; 16, Pearl Peth; 17, Mabel Osborne; 18, Cathy Stearns; 19, Mr. T. H. Look.

*Picture from Pearl Hector*







Montborne School was built in 1909, replacing an earlier building which dated from 1890.

*Picture from Mrs. Effie Calkins*

Right:

Montborne School in 1915. Front row, l to r: two boys and one girl in front not named. Second row: Edward Reinard, Harry Bartle, Chester Van Sinder, Harold Anderson, Elna Anderson, Ethel Calkins, Herberta Gilpin, Ethel



Gifford, Inez Calkins, Evelyn Cox. Third row: John Cantlin, Hilmer Nelson, Kenneth Willoughby, Margaret Nipper, Mable Calkins, Edna Nipper, Wilma Cantrell, Ella Nelson, August Reinard. Fourth row: Ethler Neal, Pat Gifford, Elgin Neal, Richard Cantlin, Elga Calkins, John Sampson. Top row: Mrs. Brownlee, Ernest Reinard, Ray Gifford, Flora Bartle, August Van Sinder.

*Picture from Effie Calkins*



Concrete School in early 1900s. Children are l to r, row 1: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6, Ed Everett; 7. Row 2: 1; 2; 3, Irene Johnson; 4; 5, Elva Everett. Row 3: 1; 2; 3; 4, Leonard Ervin; 5; 6, Cupples. Row 4: 1, Leonard Everett; 2, Nina Everett; 3, Daisy Middleton; 4, Jeannie Cupples; 5. Row 5: 1, George; 2, Flora; 3, Ira Morris.

*Picture from Leonard Everett*



Second School on Samish Island probably about 1910. Person in the center is Martha Eckenberg Hopley. Others not identified.

*Picture from James Squires, Jr.*



Ehrlich School on a cedar stump about 1908. Front row, l to r: 1, Frank Weppler; 2, Lant Platner; 3, June Schumaker; 4, Max Vaughn; 5, Velma Vaughn. Second row, l to r: 1, Kenneth McInnis; 2, Arland McInnis; 3, Gladys Schumaker; 4, Hazel Platner; 5, Lelia Hegg; 6, Max Weppler; 7, Helen McInnis; 8, Henry Weppler. Back row, l to r: 1, Violet McInnis; 2, Elnora Weppler; 3, L. D. Vaughn (teacher); 4, Bert McInnis; 5, Emil Theiler.

*Picture from Helen McInnis Millward*



did not seem to be handicapped significantly in later competition with children from other schools of the time. Their education both in and out of school taught them to depend on themselves and those who went on to further work, by correspondence or in the schools of towns or cities, seemed able to meet the challenge.

In an attempt to equalize the standards of the schools in the 1890s the State of Washington instituted examinations at the end of the 8th grade in all the subjects which had been studied, examinations which were continued until the 1920s. A County Superintendent of Schools was in charge of these as well as having general administrative responsibilities over all the districts and teachers in the county. Regulations were issued requiring some training before teachers could be certified, and boards could not employ or pay teachers who did not meet these standards. The system of certification was still very loose in 1920 because trained teachers were still in short supply but the requirements were raised year by year for new teachers.

In the early 1900s a test case in the state courts determined that it was legal for districts to levy taxes to support secondary schools. In 1894 La-Conner had begun to sponsor two years of high school study, the first district in the county to do so. After many years of commencement exercises at the end of the 10th grade it graduated its first four-year class of three students in 1903. Sedro Woolley's first class finished secondary school in 1903, the same year that Mount Vernon graduated four girls — Leo Whitney, the only boy in the class quit school in the spring to avoid giving a speech at the commencement exercises. The first Anacortes class of one boy and one girl finished in 1906. High schools were starting after 1900 in Edison, Burlington, Hamilton, and Concrete, sometimes begun with the union of two or more districts but often undertaken only by the town in which the school was located. Concrete offered only 9th and 10th grade work until the mid-twenties.

Pupils from outside the district who wished to take advantage of the better school facilities of the towns could do so if they could arrange to transport themselves to school. When Bea Gaches was twelve years old her parents were sending her to Washington School in West Mount Vernon, driving her back and forth from their home on Swinomish Channel. A crisis occurred when Mrs. Gaches broke her arm and could not drive. Mr.



Lookout School (Alger) pupils and teacher in 1902. Sitting on the ground in front, 1 to r: 1, Ernest Walker; 2, Henning Larson; 3, Mason Abbey; 4, Harry Rambaugh; 5, Gracie Rambaugh; 6, Eddie Beamis. Middle row, standing, 1 to r: 1, Carl Kruger; 2, Fred Brokens; 3, Eddie Rambaugh; 4, Emmy Walker; 5, Fannie Abbey. Back row, 1 to r: 1, George Rambaugh; 2, Annie Rambaugh; 3, Maude Thompson; 4, Alvina Broken (or Brockan or Brockens); 5, Merle Cleveland; 6, Mamie Klausterman; 7, Myrtle Thompson; 8, Cressa Abbey; 9, Prudence Abbey; 10, Edith Burgess (teacher); 11, Mrs. Ed Bemis or Beamis.  
*Picture from the Abbey family*

Blanchard School, the second school house built by the district in 1906 as a two-room school. When Blanchard Mountain was being logged and there was a shingle mill operating at Equality Colony, a third room was added but after the Blanchard mill closed it became once more a two-room school. In this 1906 picture the people are, 1 to r: 1, Twila Parsons; 2, Ellen Flynn; 3, ..... Slee; 4, Fannie Woods; 5, unidentified; 6, Dollie Peasley; 7, Charity Slee; 8, Lois Slee; 9, Mabel Hess; 10, Pearl Cameron; 11, Edna Cameron. Back row, 1 to r: 1, Bert Sevem; 2, Harry Slee; 3, Norman Sevem; 4, Gerald Hawer; 5, Wayne Hess; 6, Bill Roberts; 7, David Lawson; 8, George Lawson; 9, Willard Lawson; 10, Mynie Peasley; 11, Maurice Lawson; 12, Clarence Roberts; 13, Charlie Cameron; 14, Professor Tate.  
*Picture from Willard Lawson*







The Pierson School near Bow in 1910. The teacher is Miss Grace Simons who later married M. E. Norris and lived in Burlington. Pupils not identified.  
Skagit County Historical Museum



Samish School built in 1914 and only recently replaced.  
Picture from Angele Howe Cupples



Pleasant Ridge School about 1911 or 1912. Front row, l to r: 1, Gladys Britt; 2, Lillian Johnson; 3, Myrtle Johnson; 4, Bernice Nelson; 5, Margaret Elde; 6, Signe Elde; 7, Albert Clark; 8, Grant Echman; 9, Robert Britt; 10, Harry Clark; 11, Tage Elde. Row 2, l to r: 1, Ann Lee; 2, Mae Cornelius; 3, Mabel Johnson; 4, Dagne Elde; 5, Esther Nelson; 6, Mabel Johnson. Row 3, l to r: 1, Celia Clark (teacher); 2, Georgia Lee; 3, Evelyn Johnson; 4, Agnes Johnson; 5, Max Clark; 6, Tyra Elde; 7, Josephine Silvers; 8, ..... Britt; 9, unidentified; 10, Alan Swanson; 11, Harold Nelson; 12, Miss Rembloom (teacher).  
Picture from Grace Talin

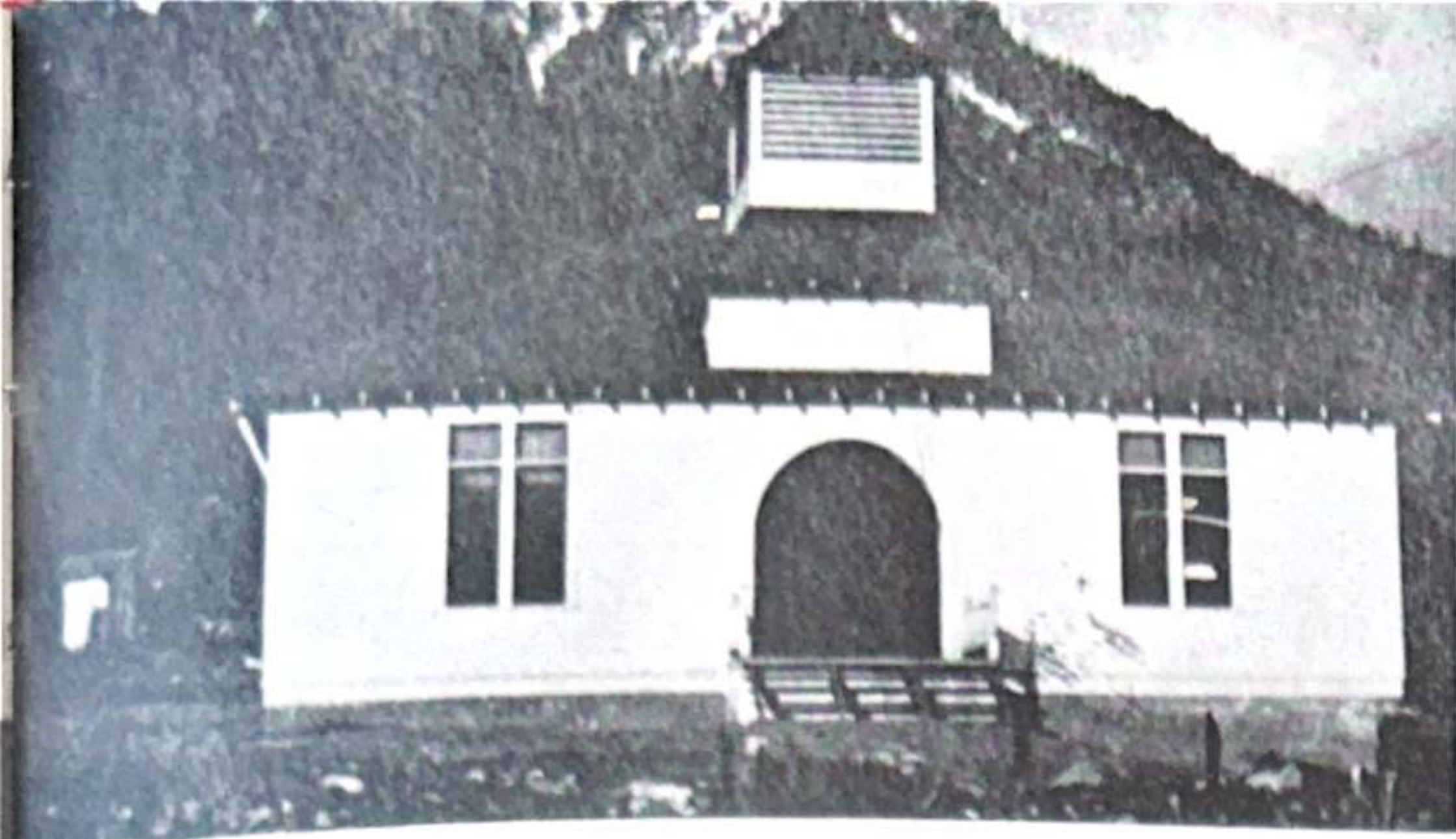
Gaches got a permit for Bea to operate the Model T, and from that time she transported herself through the rest of the grades and high school. Another alternative was for the student to arrange to live with a relative in town or with some family which would allow the boy or girl to work for his or her board. Many high school students from the rural areas walked great distances, rode bicycles, or drove some kind of vehicle, often doing chores at home before school and again at night after reaching home.

High school enrollments increased fairly rapidly after 1910 as roads improved and more students from country districts reached the town schools. By 1915 more than half the secondary students in some towns came from outside the district that was furnishing the building and paying the salaries of the teachers, a situation which spurred the formation of union high school districts around 1920. The increasing demand for gymnasiums and athletic fields also encouraged union.

The first school yearbook in the county was published by the student body of Sedro Woolley High School in 1901 when it included only a freshman and a sophomore class totalling 12 boys and girls. They described their curriculum thus:

The Freshman Class this year took up the English course, while the Sophomores continued in the classical. The subjects studied in the English course by the first year students are Algebra, Physical Geography, Studies in Literature and Ancient History, while those in the classical course studied second year Latin, European History, Plane Geometry, and second-year English. The entire school reads selections from some chosen author about twenty minutes each morning.





Rockport. The second school house.  
Picture from Tom Benton

Very much the same pattern existed in all the early secondary schools with two or three teachers handling all the subjects. As the schools moved to gain accreditation so that their graduates could be accepted at the state colleges most of them offered textbook science, began simple science laboratories, and added German as an elective foreign language, together with more advanced courses in Latin, mathematics, English and history. Libraries were also recognized as necessary but there was little money to build them up and no trained librarians on the staffs. Sedro Woolley began with a total of 78 books in the high school library in 1901 and the student body undertook to raise money to buy a set of the classics. This library situation was typical of all the schools during this period and of the communities in which they functioned, none of which had a public library until after 1910. Ropes' Book Store in Mount Vernon, carrying not only school text books and other supplies but also a shelf of the recently published books and a variety of old ones, was unique in the county.

Athletics in the secondary schools got off to a fast start. Young men had organized teams before there were any high schools to bring them together. When ten or a dozen boys saw each other every day in class, teams immediately appeared according to the season, such as football, basketball, baseball, and a little later track and tennis. The coaches at first were either faculty members or sponsors from the community, not men hired specifically for the coaching job. Basketball was the hardest to arrange because the halls in which it could be played were scarce and always inadequate until gymnasiums were built around 1920. Girls, too, wanted to and did play basketball whenever they could find a place to practice.

(Continued on Page 85)



Indian boys and girls on the Swinomish Reservation about 1909. Rhoda Gaches stands behind the back row with her hand on a girl's shoulder. The students are not identified.

Picture from Eva Gaches Collinson



Lyman School in 1909-10 and the 1st primary grade with the teacher, Miss Winifred Richards. The 40 children in the group are not identified but they seem to have an age range of two or three years.

Picture from Mrs. Robert Soine





Birdsview School in 1912. Front row: 1, Clarence Rueger; 2, 3, Miriam King; 4, Will Savage; 5, Maurice King; 6, Laura Savage. Back row: 1, Carl King; 2, Carl Pape; 3, Howard King; 4, Helen Savage; 5, May Savage; 6, Iris Rueger.

Birdsview School in 1912. Picture shows the following pupils (not in this order): Albro Wilson, Charlie Pitman, Maurice King, Helen Savage, Ella Poe, Bill Savage, Clarence Rueger, Laura Savage, Myrtle Johnson, Etta Pitman, Rose Poe, Winnie Alberty, Roy Hightower, Miriam King, May Savage, Kathryn King, Pansy Poe, James Savage, Roy Pitman and others.

*Skagit County Historical Society*



Big Lake baseball team about 1910. Since these boys all appear to be near the same age it probably was a 7th and 8th grade school team. Front row, l to r: 1, Charles Camm; 2, Dewey Watson; 3, Uno Lundstrom; 4, Otto Lightle; 5, Willis Lightle. Back row, l to r: 1, Norman Lough; 2, Ervin Kimble; 3, Art Barringer; 4, Ed Gilpin.

*Picture from Josephine Barringer Hoffman*



Big Lake School in 1908. Front row, l to r: Leonard Watson; 2, .... Lehay; 3, Charles Camm; 4, Edward Camm; 5, unidentified; 6, Effie Gilpin; 7, unidentified; 8, unidentified; 9, Gladys Watson; 10, Marjorie Osborne; 11, Miss Look (teacher). Middle row, l to r: 1, Jimmie Lehay; 2, Arthur Barringer; 3, Clarice Osborne; 4, Norman Lough; 5, Percy Wanzer; 6, unidentified; 7, Florence Ward; 8, Josephine Wilson; 9, Letha Wilson; 10, Gretchen ..... Top row, l to r: 1, Cora McMillan; 2, Agnes Osborne; 3, Elsie Nordstrom; 4, William Watson; 5, Edward Gilpin; 6, Ervin Kimble; 7, unidentified.

*Picture from Josephine Barringer Hoffman*



Ehrlich School about 1910 (all eight grades). Front row, l to r: 1, Will Fisher; 2, Sofia Fisher; 3, Thelma McInnis; 4, Frank Wepler; 5, Nora Stratton; 6, Albert Fisher; 7, Henry Fisher; 8, Raymond Stratton. Back row, l to r: 1, Kenneth McInnis; 2, Arlene McInnis; 3, Helen McInnis; 4, Max Wepler. Teacher on porch, Grace Graham.

*From Helen McInnis Millward*



Meadow School (2 mi. s. of Mount Vernon on Dike Road). Front row, l to r: 1, George Garland; 2, 3, 4, Bobbie Stein; 5, Hjalmer Lillquist; 6, 7, Emma Lillquist; 8, Clara Paulson; 9, Mabel Johnson; 10, Esther Ness; 11, Hilda Semell West; 12, Josephine Erickson; 13, Jennie Erickson; 14. Middle row: 1, 2, 3, Roy Palm; 4, 5, Hulda Lillquist; 6, Leona Sundquist; 7, Lillian Knight; 8, Selma Erickson. Back row: 1, Clarence Garland; 2, Elmer Karlson; 3, Albert Goodrich; 4, Owen Knight; 5, Johnnie Goodrich; 6, Oscar Paulson; 7, Jennie Paulson; 8, Egil Stein; 9, Wm. Hammack (teacher); 10, Kirby Egtvet; 11, Wm. Paulson; 12, Sally Finley Blackburn, teacher.

*Picture from Oswin Partington*



Harmony School baseball team in 1915. Front row, l to r: K. L. Lindberg, Fay Frazier, Fat Larm, Maynard Parker. Back row, l to r: Al Fensler, Gunnar Lindbloom, Hugo Lindbloom, Hector Lindbloom.

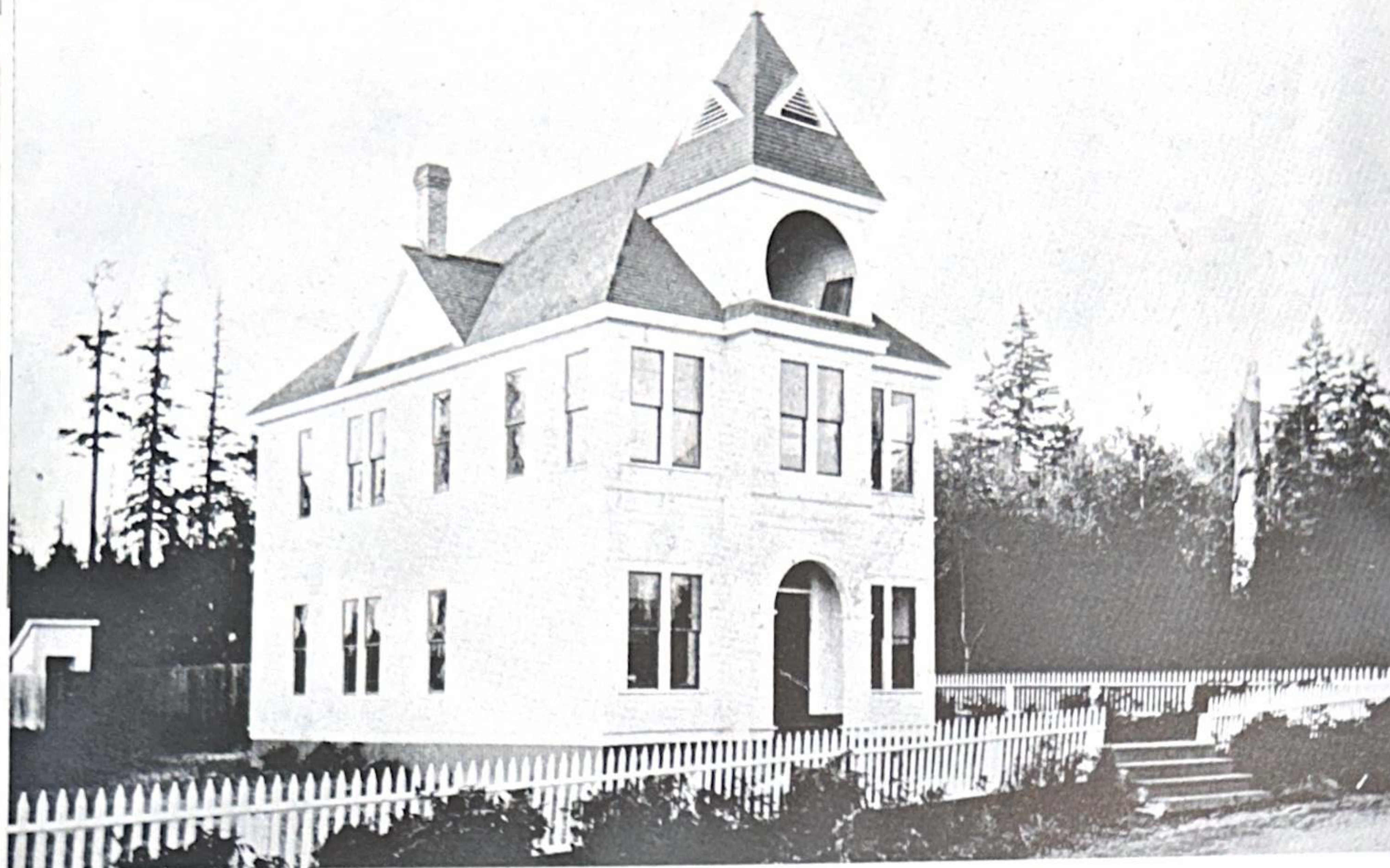
*Picture from John Locken*

Rexville School picnic in 1912. Note the milk pail, milk can, and ice cream freezer in right foreground.

*Picture from Grace Axelson*







The Fidalgo School on March's Point built in 1889. Note the entrance to the school yard over a stile, steps which climbed over a fence. This kept cattle out without having a gate which was certain to be left open by children coming and going. Also note the neatly painted outdoor toilet at the rear. This building was replaced in 1917. The Texaco refinery now covers the site.

*Picture from Leonard Munks*

Rexville School in the spring of 1905. Front row, l to r: 1, Ivy Gorton; 2, Hedvig Larson; 3, Hilda Tjersland; 4, Emma Nelson; 5, Hazel Gorton; 6, Winifred Lindfors; 7, Hilda Jacobson; 8, Evelyn Lindfors; 9, Anna Chellman. Row 2, l to r: Henry Gorton; 2, Claus Larson; 3, Joe Sharfenberg; 4, Ernest Johnson; 5, Herman Hanson; 6, Axel Nelson; 7, Perry Larson; 8, Jeno Johnson; 9, George Summers; 10, Francis Jensen; 11, Garfield Johnson; 12, Norman Johnson; 13, Arthur Anderson. Back row, l to r: 1, Kate Jacobson; 2, Katharine Doyle; 3, Alma Chelman; 4, Ruby Gough (teacher); 5, Edith Christianson; 6, Mae Doyle; 7, Lula Pond.

*Picture from Winnifred Lindfors Van Ornum*



Fredonia School in 1918. Front row, l to r: Melvin Beckley, Mabel Knudson. Middle row, l to r: Harold Abbott, Win Ballinger, Archie Moreau, Newell Rhoades, Laurence Ballinger, Ed. Knudson, Ruth Lundquist, Dorothy Brennan, Georgia Regenvetter, Lillian McCall. Back row, l to r: Leland Esary, Alvin Caling, Art Thomason, Walter McKibben, Agnes Biever (teacher), Opal Regenvetter, Anna Caling, Helen Knudson.

*Picture from Harold Abbott*



The new Harmony School, built in 1908. The building appears to have four classrooms, two on each floor, but it does not seem that all were used immediately.

Picture from Carl Anderson



Rexville School in 1920. Front row, l to r: 1, Donald Summers; 2, Philip Summers; 3, Russell Hanson; 4, ..... Dalan; 5, .... Dalan; 6, Lloyd Summers; 7, Lillian Safstrom; 8, LeRoy Larson; 6, Eugene Thein; 10, George Moore. Row 2, l to r: 1, Francis Thein; 2, Fred Gustafson; 3, Grace Hastie; 4, Mabel Bessner; 5, Grace Larson; 6, Evelyn Case; 7, Caroline Moore; 8, Ray McNeal. Row 3, l to r: 1, Otilla Moore; 2, Ella McNeal; 3, Ada Summers; 4, Lawrence Summers; 5, Ruby Summers; 6, Charles Summers; 7, Edith Safstrom. Row 4, l to r: 1, Elsie Summers; 2, Clarence Pierson; 3, Willard Gustafson; 4, Fred Moore; 5, Austin Lund. Row 5, l to r: 1, Kathryn Hastie; 2, Ruth Hannaford; 3, Clarence Summers; 4, Augustus Moore. Teachers: Clara Bartels and Margaret Albaugh.

Picture from Phil Summers

Lincoln School in Mount Vernon: the Fifth Grade in 1915. Boys in picture: Archie Harsh, Luther Trammell, Marriot Fader, Wallace Story, Russell Sheriff, Sherman Fox, Jack Martin, Andrew ....., T. Great-house, Raymond Cameron, Roy Detillion, Jerome Hannaford, Earl Garland, Ace Nichols, ..... Crosby, Frank "Jimmer" Frets, Louis Wersen. Girls in picture: Christine ....., Marjorie ....., Bertha ....., Loretta ....., Sharon ....., Dorothy Wells, Irene Herrold, Esther Fitzgerald, Kate Frets (scratched out), Ruth Elkins, Effie Peterson, Pearl Hanstad, Edna Larson, Margaret Finch, Beatrice Albert, Georgia Lee, Florence Polson, Clara Ward. Teacher, Miss Hall.

Picture from Kate Frets Ruddell





Harmony School in 1908. Bottom row: Howard Rosenquist, Gunnar Lindbloom, Oscar Larm, Jessie Frazer, Gladys Reay, Julia Felt, Alice Allquist, Hilda Linder, Clair Johnson, Sigrid Olson, Hulda Linder, Edna Carlson, Minnie Hanson, Myrtle Oakland, Eda Olson. 2nd row: Ed Wolf, Rollo Storrs, Hector Lindbloom, Lilly Allquist, Carl A. Anderson, Alrick Erickson, Goldie Hanke, Alma Lindberg, Lena Forbes, Esther Anderson, Myrtle Rosenquist, Clifford Pearson, Mabel Freeberg, Jennie Erickson, Leonard Wolf, Fredolph Jungquist, Erick ....., Gus Jungquist. 3rd row: John Oakland, Elmer Hanson, Lilly Lindbloom, Edith Lindbloom, Alice Erickson, Invar Holt, Roy Churchill, Iver



Jungquist, Oscar Rosenquist, Elmer Jungquist, Almada Rosenquist, Esther Linder, Dick Jones, Elmer Carlson, Hugo Lindbloom, Marie Miller, Lillie Reay, Alice Jungquist. 4th row: Esther Johnson, Lydia Johnson, Anna Anderson, Emil Jungquist, Gerald Lindberg, Maggie Gabrielson, Marie Wolf, Henry Buck, Alfonso Olson, Andrew Schidelman, Louise Pearson, Ruth Carlson, Minnie Allquist, Ed Buck, Rupert Lindberg. Top row: Ellen Erickson, Esther Lindberg, Mary Iverson, Tillie Forbes, Callie Hoover, Miss Snyder, teacher, upper room; Mrs. Jones, Primary room; Frank Phipps, Andrew Anderson, Ira Wolf, Margaret Jones, Lilly Olson, Annie Allquist, Mabel Larm. Picture from Rose Marie Wolf



Rexville School Fair about 1914. Maypole dances, folk dances, exhibits of the work of students in manual training and sewing, and a program made up the Fair. Shown in the picture row 1, seated, l to r: 1, Elmer Larson; 2, unidentified; 3, unidentified; 4, Melvin Hansen; 5, Willard Larson; 6, unidentified; 7, S. B. Miller; 8, Alvord Summers; 9, Ted Johnson; 10, unidentified. Row 2, l to r: 1, ..... Johnson; 2, Winifred O'Loughlin; 3, Theodosia Lindfors; 4, Annie Summers; 5, Grace Summers; 6, Abbie Usher; 7, Ada Summers; 8, Bertha Hayton; 9, Agnes Swanberg; 10, Mildred Johnson; 11, Clara Bessner; 12, Mildred Safstrom; 13, LaVerne Lindfors; 14, Mildred Bessner. Row 3, l to r: 1, ..... Johnson; 2, ..... Johnson; 3, Annie Miller; 4, Marie Hayton; 5, Edith Jacobson; 6, Floy Hayton; 7, LaVerne McNiel; 8, Herbert Bessner; 9, Clara Hansen; 10, Esther Ring. Back row, l to r: 1, Vernon Hayton; 2, John Miller; 3, Sig Johnson; 4, Herbert D. Bessner; 5, Harold Jacobson; 6, Harry Hansen; 7, Henry Tjersland; 8, Eugene Bessner.

Picture from Mabel Bessner Reedy



Rexville School Fan Drill about 1914. 1, Bertha Hayton; 2, Grace Summers; 3, Virginia Hastie; 4, Ruth Hannaford; 5, Signe Lund; 6, Mildred Johnson; 7, Kathryn Hastie.

Picture from Elsie Larson



Ridgeway School in 1908. First row, l to r: 1, Louis Carlson; 2, David Christofferson; 3, Achsa Gallacher; 4, Chester Lemon; 5, Vera Reay; 6, Roy Olander; 7, Lloyd Carlson; 8, unidentified; 9, Vaughn Reay; 10, Bernice Christofferson; 11, Donald Leigh; 12, Herman Axelsson; 13, unidentified; 14, Oscar Johnson. Second row, l to r: Carl Schroeder; 2, Vincent Berg; 3, Luther Johnson; 4, Phil Thompson; 5, Bub Lockhart; 6, Jim Snowden; 7, William Olander; 8, Lillie Berg; 9, Carl Kallstrom; 10, Lena Forbes; 11, Minnie Soper; 12, Lillie Berg.

Third row, l to r: 1, Frances Gallacher; 2, Ella Schroeder; 3, Frank Gallacher; 4, Martin Lockhart; 5, Helen Axelsson; 6, Frank Ewing; 7, Dorothy .....; 8, Fred Hayward; 9, William Schroeder; 10, Lizzie Elde; 11, Hildur Elde. Fourth row, l to r: 1, Mr. Evans (teacher); 2, Ann Axelsson; 3, Leatha Fulk; 4, Edith Snowden; 5, Veda Leigh; 6, Hannah Kallstrom; 7, Jennie Gallacher; 8, Ruth Elde; 9, Minnie Hayward; 10, Fred Hayward; 11, William Ewing; 12, Albert Forbes; 13, Fred Kill; Teacher, Mrs. Eva Mae Bletz.

Picture from Lou Carlson



Ridgeway School about 1912. Front row, l to r: 1, Ted Stacey; 2, Philip Elde; 3, ..... Hitchcock; 4, Nettie Olander; 5, Dorothy Burns; 6, Vesta Hanson; 7, Lela Fish; 8, Lila McMoran; 9, Mildred Elde; 10, Marie Hanson; 11, Ted Snowden; 12, Wynne Gallacher; 13, Ruthford Anderson. Second row, l to r: 1, Art Gallacher; 2, Lionel Fish; 3, Vaughn Reay; 4, Oscar Johnson; 5, Herman Axelsson; 6, Achsa Gallacher; 7, Riley Ewing; 8, Doris Barth; 9, Luther Johnson; 10, Louie Carlson; 11, Roy

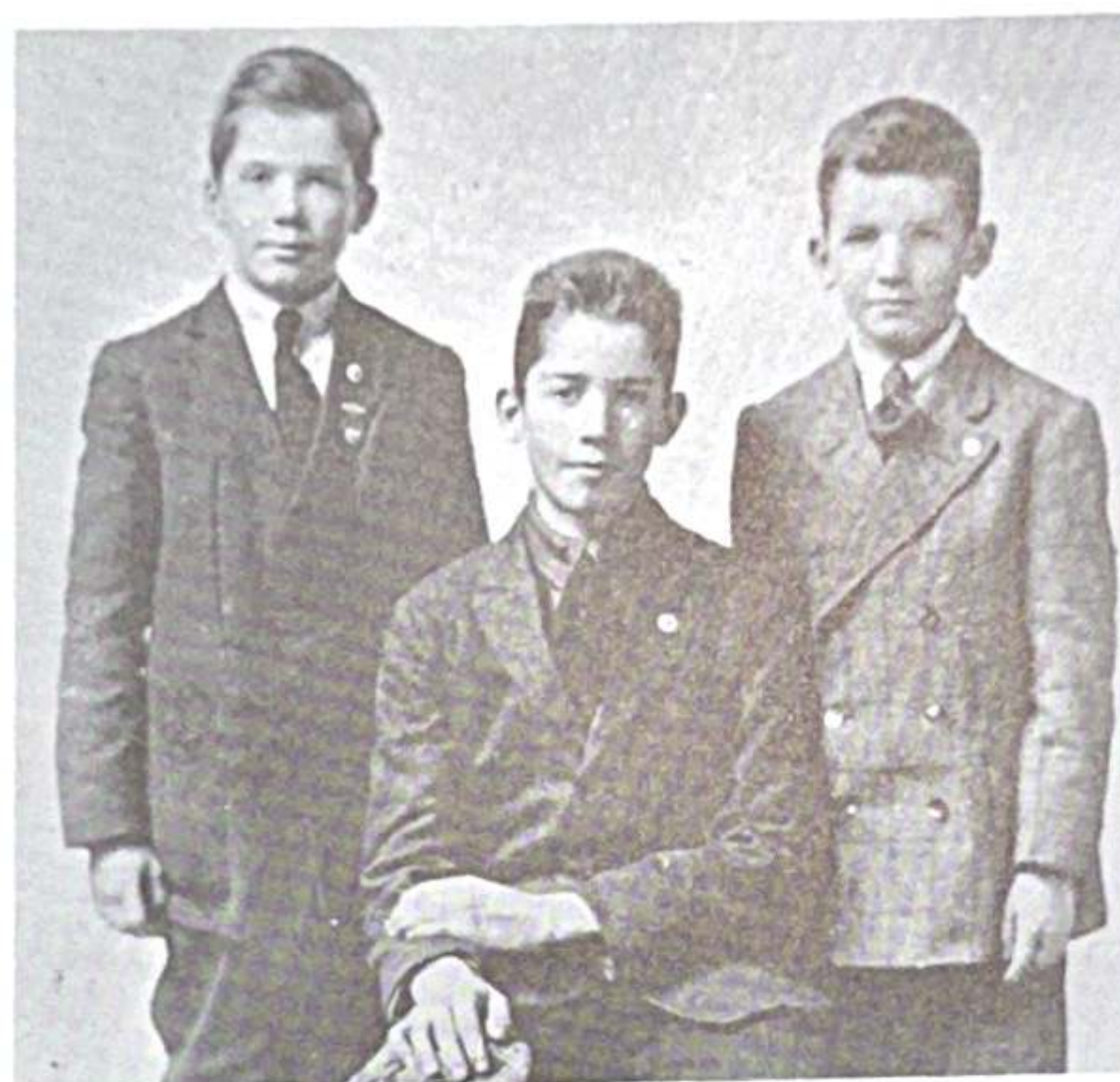
Olander; 12, Lillian Schroeder; 13, Katherine Axelsson; 14, Guy McMoran; 15, Ethel Barth; 16, Vera Reay. Third row, l to r: 1, Hildur Elde; 2, Rosie Hanson; 3, Helen Axelsson; 4, Wilbur Olander; 5, Carl Kallstrom; 6, Jessie Meeks (teacher). Back row, l to r: 1, Mr. Clark (teacher); 2, Bill Schroeder; 3, Frank Ewing; 4, Lloyd Carlson; 5, Carl Schroeder; 6, Jim Snowden; 7, Fred Kill; 8, Martin Lockhart; 9, Phillip Thompson; 10, Purcell Lockhart; 11, Andy Hansen.

Picture from Vera Reay Hedlund



Edison School in 1923. All elementary grades but not high school. Row 1, l to r, standing: Mary Whelan, Thomas Thorson, Earl Standley, Robert Lee, Grant Loop. Kneeling: Marion Dulin, Ella Martinson, Helen Mong, Lucille Graff, Dorothy Loop, Lois Dulin, Rosie Neff. Standing: unidentified, Don Hopley, Simer Berkland, Lloyd Culver. Row 2, l to r: Willard Streeter, Simon Anderson, Ben Omdal, Charles McCullough, Kenneth Hebard, Alfred Hansen, Ben Taylor, Max Laughlin, Harry Thompson, Donald Streeter, Eva Laughlin, Marie Thompson, Ella Hansen, Ellen Henry, Roland Lee, Esther Bebson (teacher). Row 3, l to r: Wayne Hall, Burel Wilson (teacher), Roy Omdal, Mason Louis, Sandford Omdal, ..... Thorson, Donald Dennis, Selma Anderson, Dorothy Martin. Row 4, l to r: Mildred Loop, Donald Walter, Lester Wear, Margaret Harr, Clifford Frost, Katherine Dennis. Row 5, l to r: Unidentified, Roy Moses, Nelson Berkland, Bernard Lee, Margaret Martinson, Virginia Hall, Josephine Olson. Row 6, l to r: Gay Houser, Beth Jones, Evelyn Hopley, Mina Taylor, Beatrice Seegelbarth, Meinder Pille, Arthur Johnson, Margaret Martin, Norse Mong. Row 7, l to r: Helen Hoffman, Reba Thorson, Margaret Phipps, unidentified, Eleanor Engiebreton, Thomas Esary, Harold Mong, Clarence Shepard, Leland Culver, Arnold Brown. Row 8, l to r: Ruth Neff, Ellan Standley, Helen McTaggart, Nina Culver, Olive Houser. Row 9, l to r: Orville Wear, Leif Berkland, Vivian Loughlin, Stella Johnson, Allen Hood, Earl McCarty, Gene Lemmer. Row 10, l to r: Roy Sather, Eva Stump, Leona Hebard, Howard Graff, Geneva Nelles, Ruby Benson, Sybil Gardner, Milton Nelles. Row 11, l to r: Merlin Wilson, Ann Anderson, Robert McCullough, Clair Sather, Merton McCullough, Margarite Johnson, Charlie Hoffman, Shirrel Graff, Albert Anderson, Lee Myhre. Row 12, l to r: Jessie Morse, Wayne Baumgardner, George Henry, Frank Louis, Donald Phipps, Colvin Wilson. Row 13, l to r: Bess Conn (teacher), Eldon Nelles, Marian Martin (teacher), Ben Gardner, Teresa Wells (teacher), Ralph Thomas, Kenneth McMillen. The high school was in the same building.

*Picture from Dorothy McCullough Rydberg*



About 1918. Edward R. Murrow as a schoolboy in Blanchard (right) with his brothers, Dewey on the left and Lacey in the middle. Twenty-one years later Ed Murrow's broadcasts from London during World War II made him internationally famous and set the patterns for radio and TV news-casts.

*From the collection of Andy Loft*

Woolley School in 1897 or 1898 before the adjacent towns of Sedro and Woolley decided to become one.

Mr. Look was the teacher.  
*Picture from the Skagit County Historical Museum*





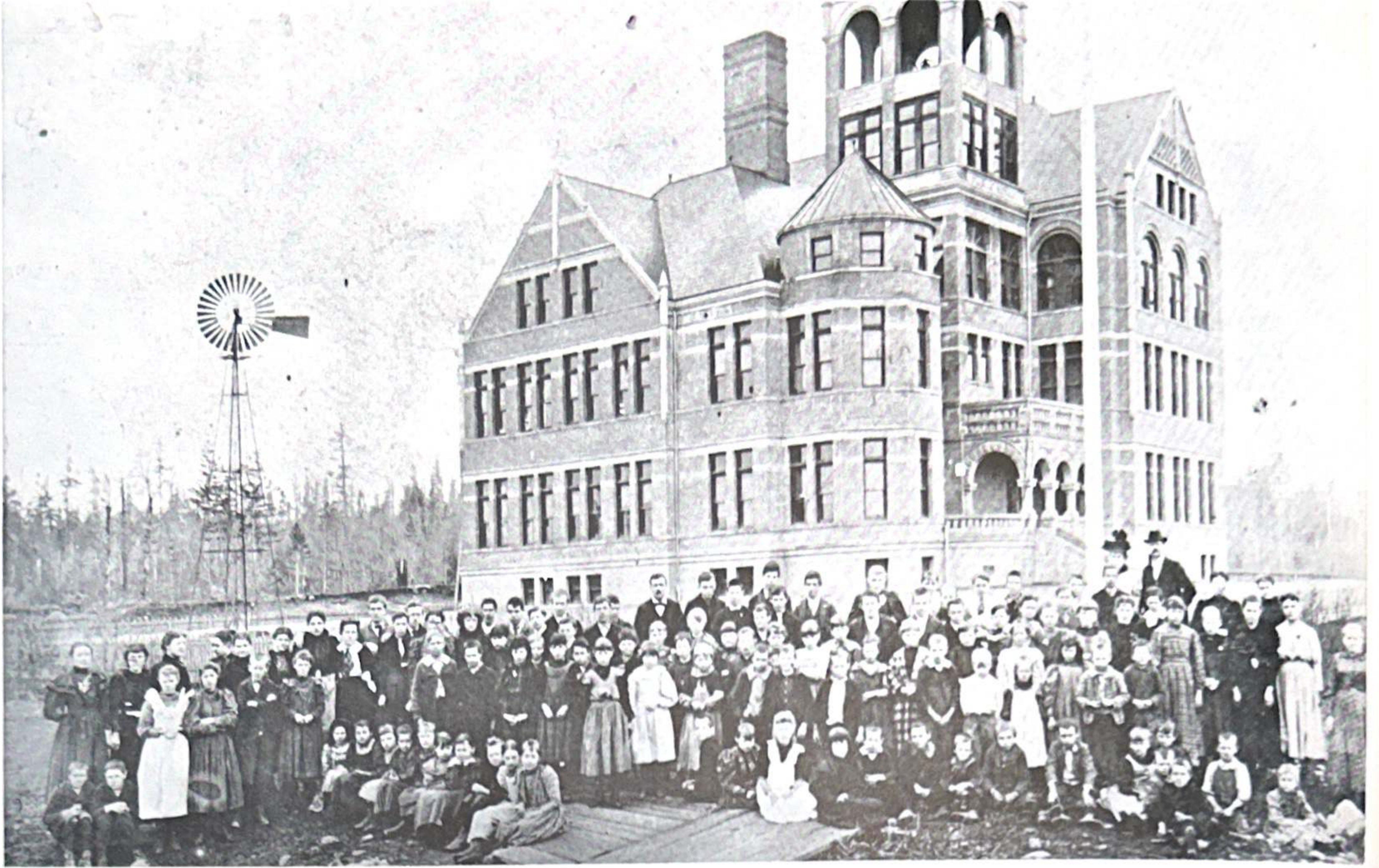


Burlington 8th grade in 1901. Front row: 1, Kate Leatherwood; 2, Jim Buck; 3, M. E. Norris; 4, Lulu Waite; 5, Alice Shidler; 6, Earl Scott; 7, Stella Garl; 8, Laura Rowley. Second row: 1, Jim Leatherwood; 2, Uquina Hurley; 3, Alva Thomas; 4, Jane Leatherwood; 5, Grace Norris; 6, Mr. Farrell, teacher. Third row: 1, Frank Umbarger; 2, Pearl Llewellyn; 3, Clint Umbarger; 4, Guy Ritchford; 5, Lon Leatherwood.  
Skagit County Historical Museum

Burlington 7th or 8th grade in 1910. Front row, l to r: Jessie Whitney (Pulver), Cora Hoffenbeck, Hazel Shoemaker, Florence Harlick, Goldene Umbarger (McCauley), Armanda Leatherwood (Graham), Mildred Stacey. Second row, l to r: Leroy Hanley, Maudie Day (Brown), Ralph ..... Ruth Neff (Bussing), Leta Lane, Raymond Miller. Third row, l to r: Lewis Lamar, Roy Brown, Willard Hurley, Henry Rohweder, Bill Shidler. Back row, l to r: Bob Weideman, Carl Carter, Bill Whitney, Elmer Johnson, Louis Henry, Eugene Campbell, John Francis Healey, Ed Shidler, Jess Stacey, Guy Norris, Walter Anderson, Oliver Gear.  
Picture from Jessie Whitney Pulver







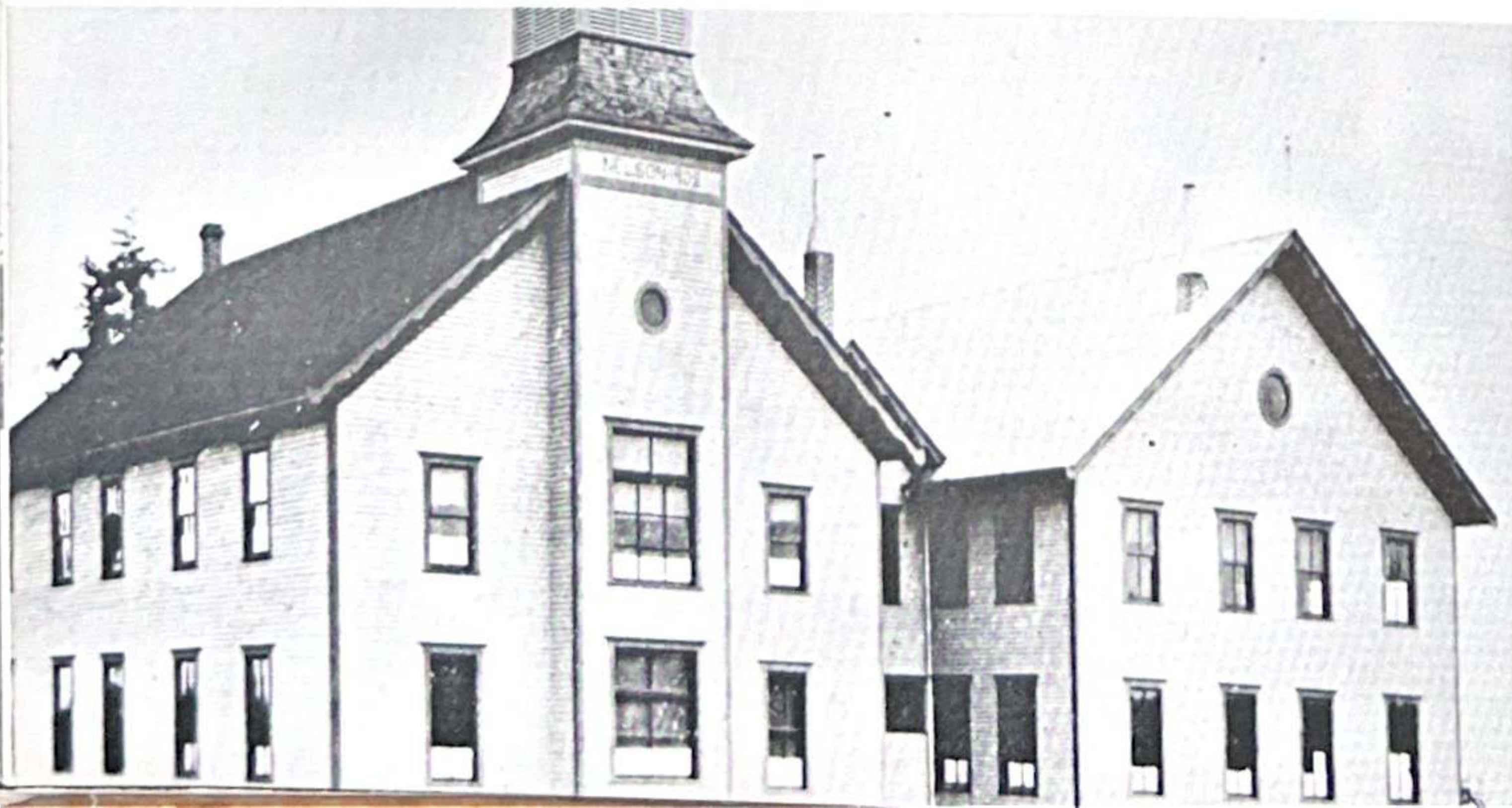
The Columbian School in Anacortes which housed both grades and high school when the secondary school was small. The city did not establish a four-year high school

until 1902, graduating its first class in 1906. This picture apparently dates from the 1890s.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

The Anacortes Hotel, built of bricks made in See's Brickyard during the Anacortes boom. In this picture it is being used as a school, called the Whitney School.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*



The Nelson School in Anacortes built in 1902.  
*From the collection of Wallie Funk*





One of two cooking classes at Mount Vernon High School the first year that Home Economics was taught. L to r: Katherine Smith, Dorothy Stewart, Ellen Erickson, Irene Taylor, Adrianna Lutro, Grace Stevens, Emma McCormick,

Anna Eyre, Miss Ada Wexler (teacher), Hannah Pearson, Hazel Moores, Myrtle Good, Mabel Freeberg, Anna McMeekin, Margaret Willis, Amy Morris.

*Picture from Mrs. William Holtcamp*

A residue of bitter rivalry existed among the towns of the county, the remains of the fierce battles over the county seat, and this carried on into the interscholastic athletic contests. Rivalry for county championships was intense though local schools played many teams from outside the county in order to fill out the schedule. It was the custom in basketball, when both girls' and boys' teams were playing, for the evening to begin with the first half of the girls' game, followed by the first half of the boys'. Then the girls' game was finished with moderate excitement and the real climax of the evening came as the boys fought out their final period.

Debate was another field for interscholastic competition though this did not generate anything like the excitement of sports. High schools, too, often gave plays, sometimes Shakespeare or Sheridan, heavily censored for young people, sometimes innocuous and amusing comedies specially published for schools. Most schools had music programs, usually glee clubs, sometimes bands, but seldom musical productions which combined the two. After 1910 home economics was coming into the curriculum; for the boys, courses in manual training and agriculture were being offered.

The rural schools which went only through the 8th or 9th grade often had a rich program of activities which involved the adults as well as the children, Christmas programs, school fairs, and picnics. There were spelling bees, declamation contests, and even 7th and 8th grade baseball and basketball teams that played regularly with other

schools so that the team which won most of the games felt that it had won the "championship."

With the start of World War I in 1914 there was a great deal of anti-German feeling and by the time the United States entered the war in 1917 German was dropped from the curriculum and French and Spanish came in to take its place. It never occurred to anyone that one of the Scandinavian tongues might be taught as a modern language in the schools. The Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish students actually devoted a great deal of energy and ingenuity to *not* learning the speech of their immigrant elders, answering in English when spoken to in another language. Skagit County schools were, of course, typical of those throughout the country in encouraging children to reject the old world heritage of foreign born parents.

Washington School in Mount Vernon, built in 1909. The town extended its water lines under the river to west Mount Vernon in order to service the new school.  
*Skagit County Historical Museum*







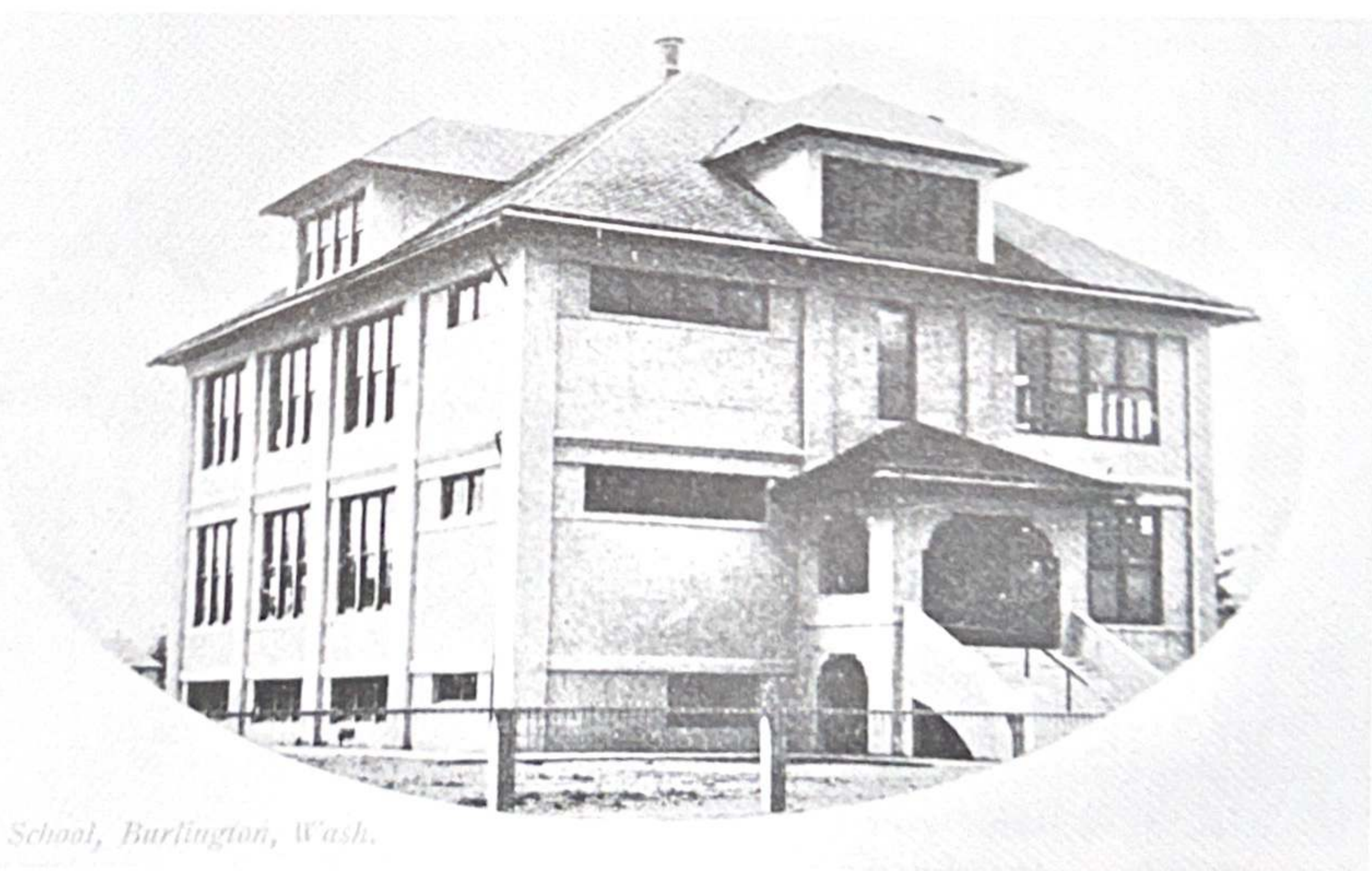
Burlington School. The building was built in 1892. This picture shows all the students of the school in 1903-4

in front of the building.

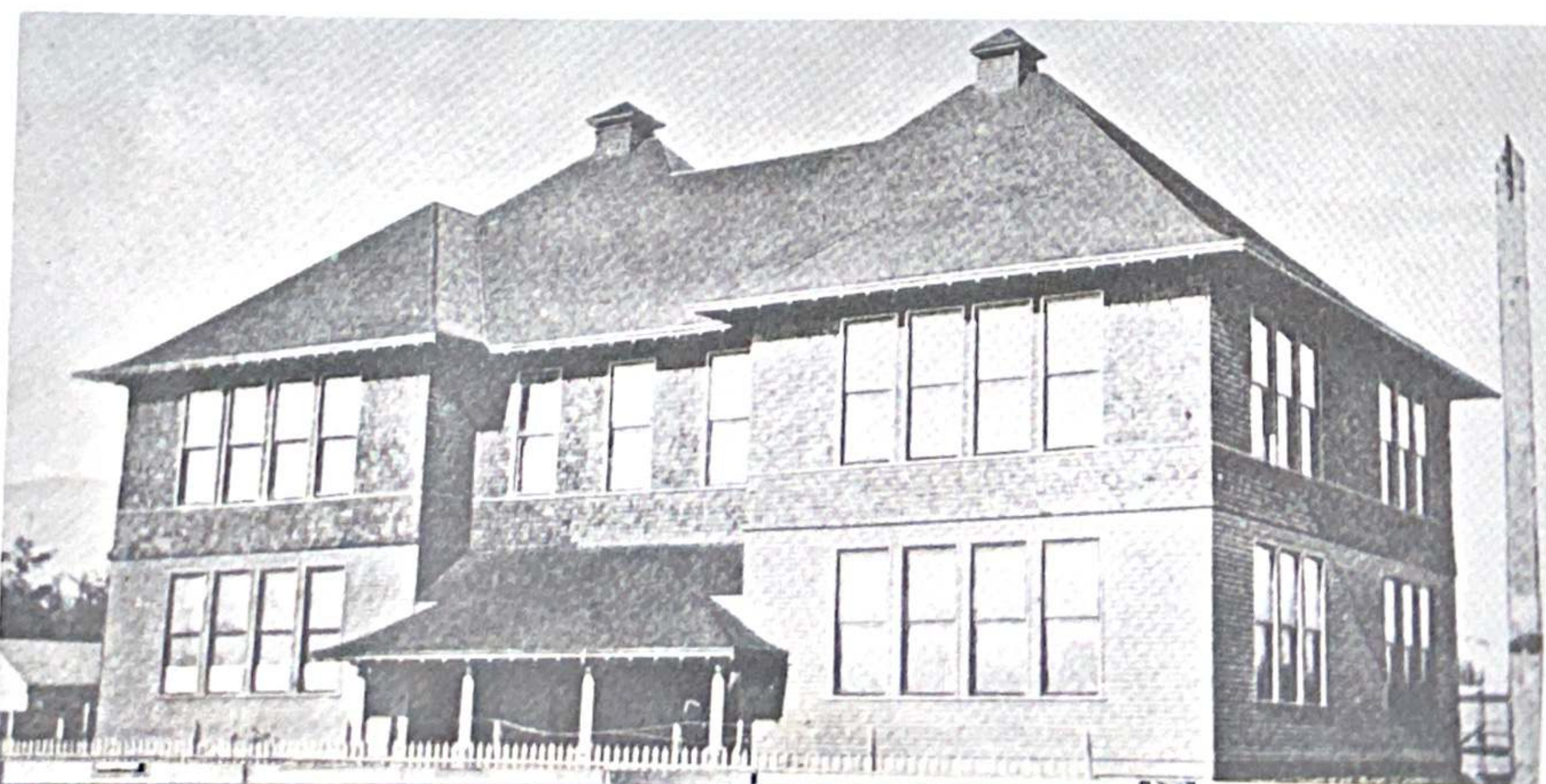
*Picture from Jessie Whitney Pulver*

Burlington High School building from a postcard postmarked 1911.

*Picture from Jessie Whitney Pulver*



*High School, Burlington, Wash.*



Sedro Woolley High School from a postcard dated 1911.

*Picture from Leta Steen*



Anacortes High School football team of 1904. The school had just become a four-year school and would not graduate a senior class of one boy and one girl for two more years.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*



Girls' basketball squad of Anacortes High School date unknown, but certainly not later than early 1900s.  
*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

The 1910 basketball team of Anacortes High School. This picture appeared in THE RHODODENDRON, the 1910 yearbook of the school. Though Ambrose Ratliffe was on the team and also an editor of the yearbook, the boys are not identified by name.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*







Burlington High School. The first freshman class, 1913. Boy in front: Oreon Stearns. Row of girls, l to r: 1, Queenie Harper; 2, Hulda Johnson; 3, Jessie Shidler; 4, Florence Bush; 5, Ethel Tourtelot; 6, Mabel Rogers. Next row, boys: 1, Ray Jordan; 2, Jack Young; 3, Bill Stacey; 4, Charley Andus. Fourth row: 1, Robert Graham; 2, Vivian Miller. Back row: 1, Albert Ovenell; 2, Verne Kirkby; 3, Raymond Zugweid.

*Picture from Albert Ovenell*

Burlington High School girls' basketball team, 1915. L to r: Jessie Smith, Hulda Johnson, Bernice Childs, Florence Bush, Geneva Wolff, Queenie Harper.

*Picture from Ella Smith Nichols*



Burlington High School basketball team, 1911-12. L to r: Norman Johnson, Dick Hanley, Hugh Currie, Bill Shidler, Al Currie, Bernie Umbarger, Roy Hanley, Chester Ries.

*Picture from Jessie Whitney Pulver*





Burlington High School presented "Twelfth Night" about 1915. In the cast were, l to r, front row: Gladys Thomas, Mildred Patterson, Edna Martin, Irene Doarsan, Mabel

Walters. Back row, standing, l to r: Carol Stacey, Madge Callahan, Audra Parkey, Ruby Martin, Alvena Lane, Grace Whitman, Vera Dunbar. *Picture from Albert Ovenell*

Sewing class at Mount Vernon High School in 1912-3, the first year that Home Economics was taught. Ada

Wexler was the teacher. Note the garments made by students and displayed around the room. *Picture from Mrs. William Holtcamp*







Burlington High School championship football team in 1911. L to r: Roy Hanley, Guy Norris, Gerald Munks, Bernard Umbarger, Norman Johnson, A. W. Bush, Richard Yeatman, Will Shidler, Hugh Currie, Allan Currie, Charlie Armstrong, Richard Hanley.

*Picture from Skagit County Historical Museum*

Burlington High School baseball team of 1911-12. Front row, sitting, l to r: Guy Norris, Terence Hanley (mascot), Charlie Armstrong. Second row, kneeling, l to r: Alex Johnson, Bernie Umbarger, Roy Hanley, Dick Hanley. Back row, standing, l to r: Dick Yeatman, Allen Currie, Hugh Currie, Chester Ries, Norman Johnson, unidentified coach, Mr. Bush.

*Picture from Skagit County Historical Museum*



Anacortes championship football team of 1912.  
*From the collection of Wallie Funk*





La Conner girls' basketball team, May, 1904. Front row: Cora Hall, Ina Wells. Second row: Medah Ellis, Martha

Gipple, Pearl Bates. Back row: Bess Huddleson, Lydia Black, Alice Jorgenson, Minnie Anderson.  
*Skagit County Historical Museum*

La Conner High School football team, about 1916. Front row, seated on floor, l to r: 1, Warren Smith; 2, ..... Malloy; 3, Phil Cornelius. Second row, seated, l to r: 1, Fred Foot; 2, Clarence Dunlap; 3, Otis ..... Back

row, standing, l to r: 1, George Dunlap; 2, Rupert Edmonds; 3, Carl O'Loughlin; 4, Mr. Bruner (teacher); 5, Morris Nelson; 6, Cliff Esary; 7, Herman Anderson.  
*Picture from Grace Talin*





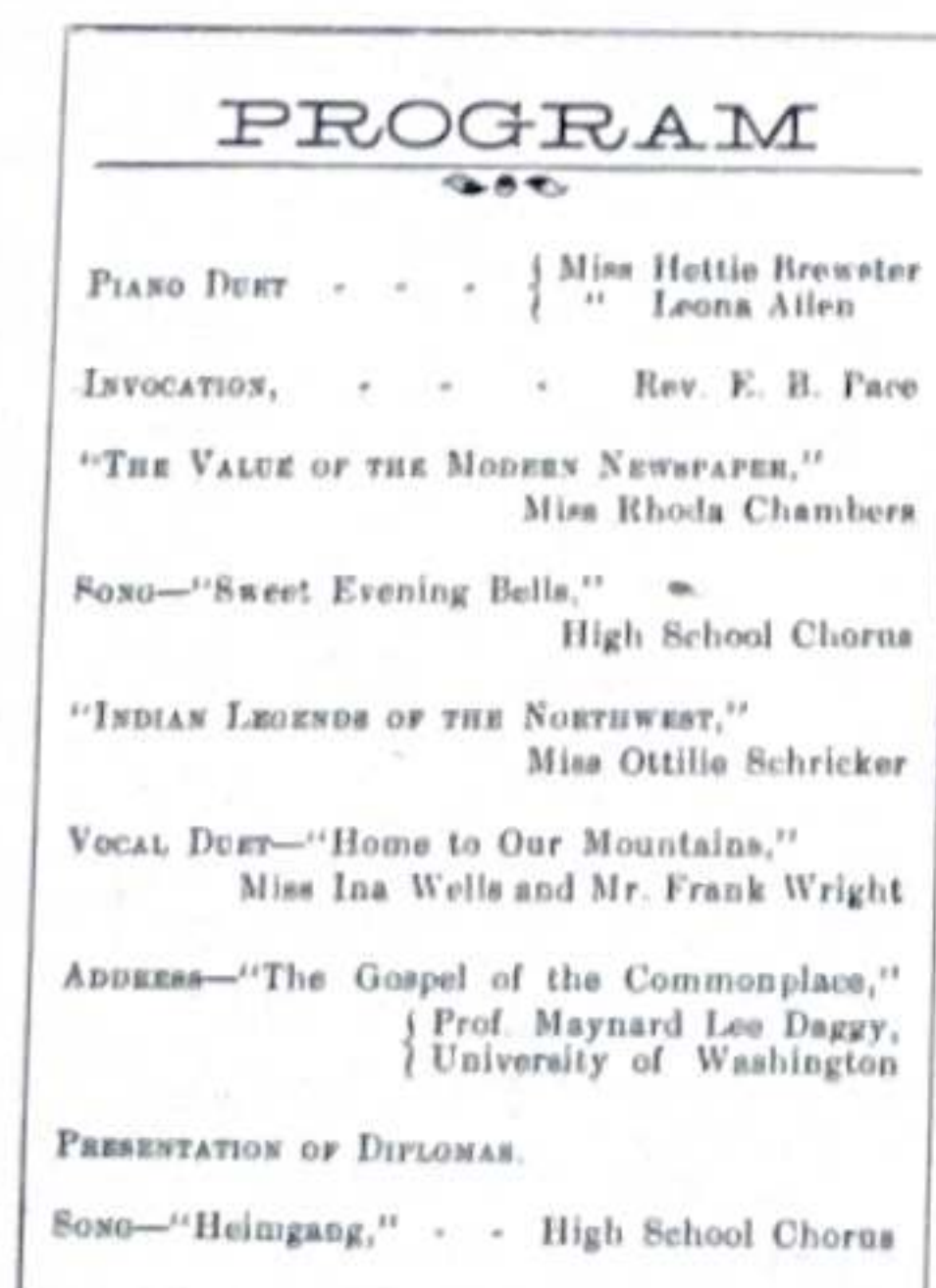
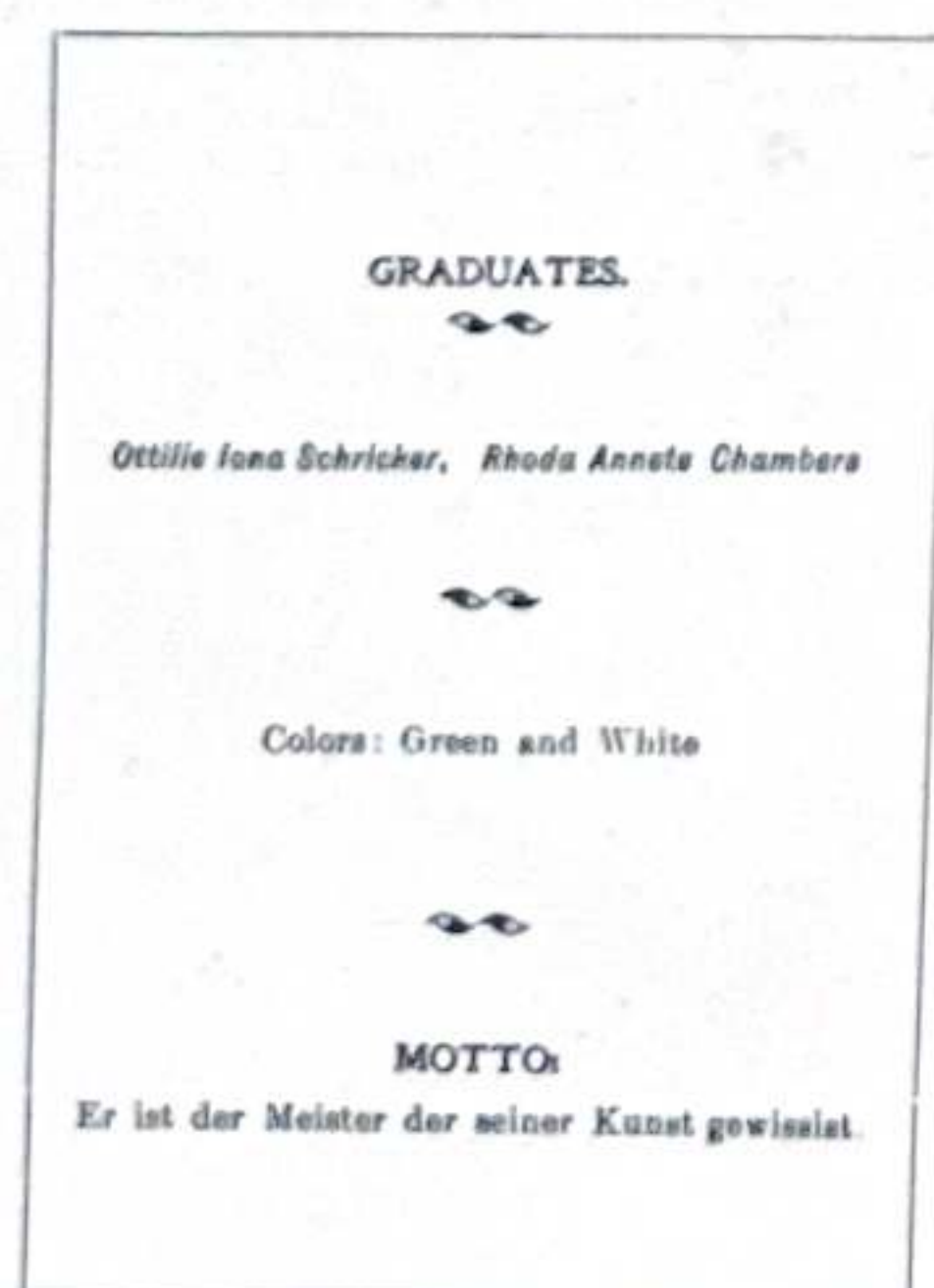
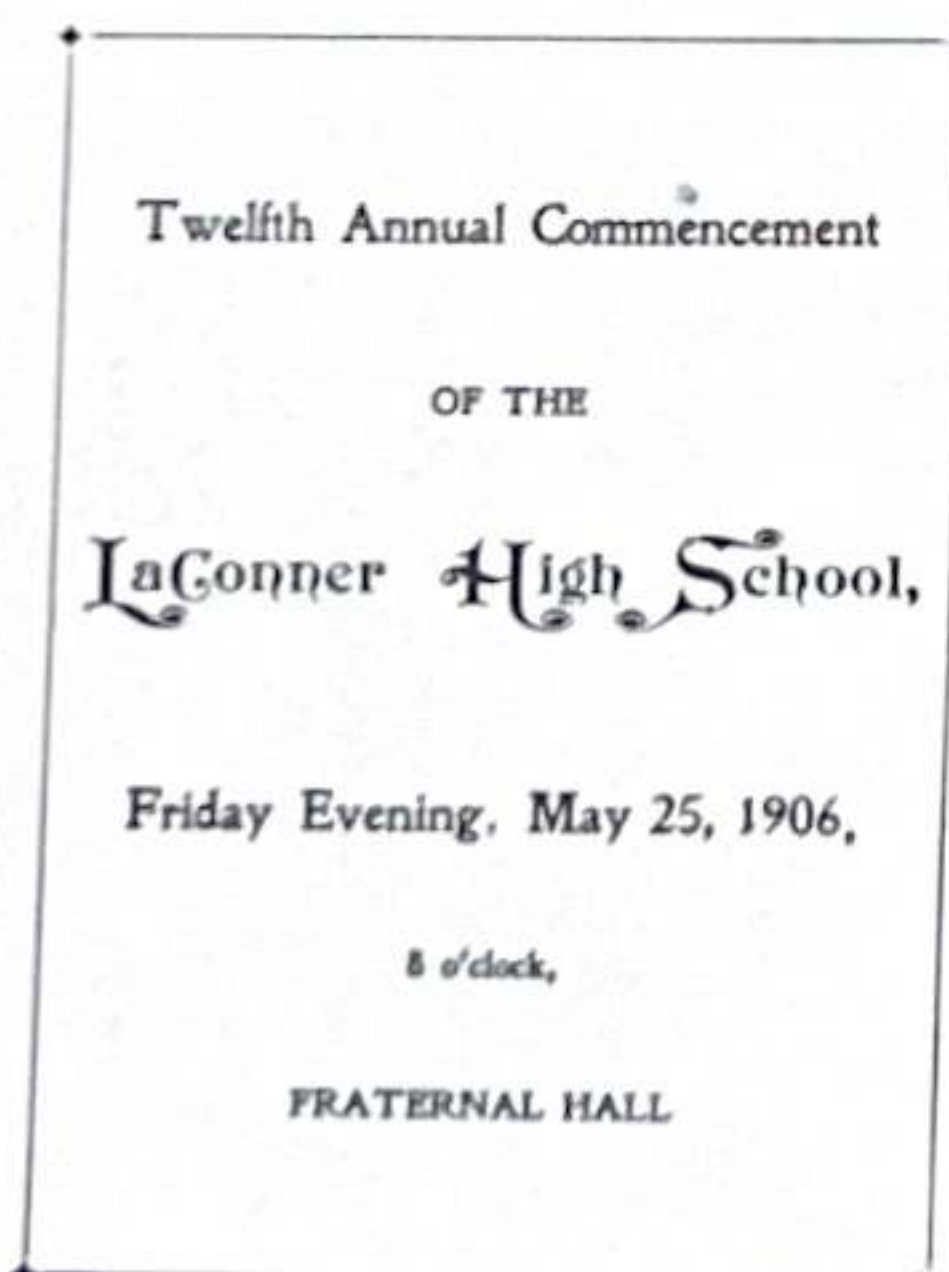
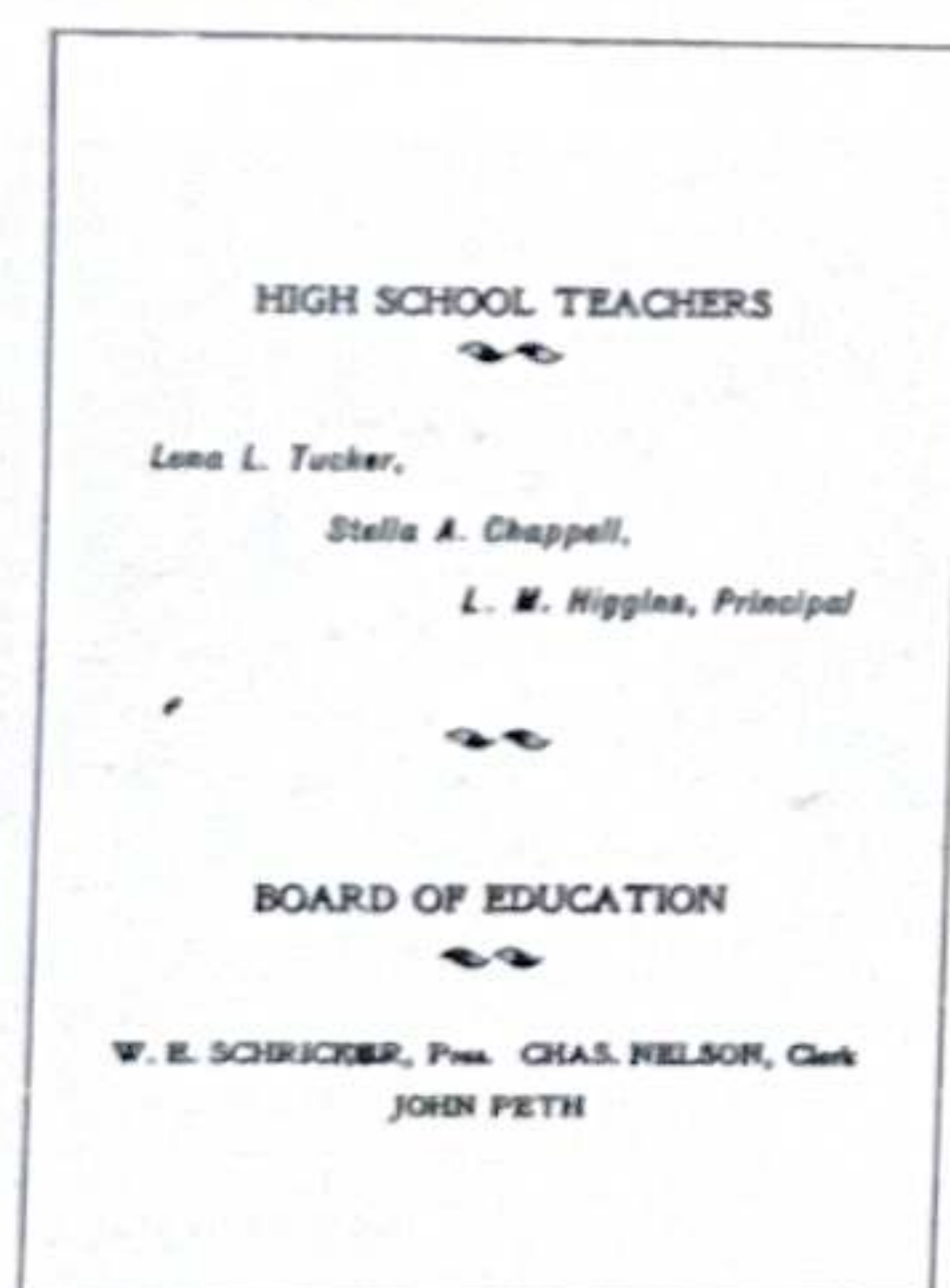


La Conner High School presented a cantata in October, 1905, in the I.O.O.F. Hall (Fraternal Hall). Front row: 1, Winnie McGlinn; 2, Mayme Allen; 3, Katie Breslick; 4, Ina Wells; 5, Cora Hall; 6, Hettie Brewster; 7, Leona

Allen. Back row: 1, Grace Martin; 2, Mabel Siegfried; 3, Mary Johnson; 4, Evelyn Johnson; 5, Hazel Rawlins; 6, Ethel Bates.

*Skagit County Historical Society*

Program of the La Conner High School graduation exercises for May 25, 1906. Cover and inside of the folder.  
*Program from P. H. Dunlap*



Fifth grade at Lincoln School in Mount Vernon about 1909. The teacher is Bess Holden who later became Mrs. David Hammack. Pupils are not all identified but they include: Alvina Nichols, Naomi Pulliam, Libby Johnson, Gladys Johnston, Culver Holt, Henry Fox, George Pedersen, John Colvin, Lyle Branchflower, Earl Anable, Viola Doolittle, James G. Smith, Milton Schwartz, Clarence Fox, Lloyd Fox, Ida Maris, George Risbell, Sam Craig, Derb Stewart, Marie Wells.

*Picture from Mary Kean Binzer*





## Chapter V

### CASH CROPS

Hay, oats, and potatoes, the mainstays of the first farmers on the Skagit flats, continued to be the principal crops on the valley farms until after 1920 but conditions were changing. The Granges spread new ideas; farmers read farm journals and experimented with new crops; leaders appeared who showed the value of cooperation and joint action.

Even the richest delta land can be worn out by single cropping but diversification was brought about more by prices and markets than by theoretical knowledge. For one thing the market for oats was declining. Many loggings camps, whose oxen and horses had consumed a large part of the oats and hay in the early years, were closed down after the panic of 1893 and the slump which followed. When the boom years began again in the late 1890s oxen had largely disappeared from the operations and most of the horses had been dis-

placed by steam locomotives and donkey engines which were fed wood, not oats and hay. The few line horses which remained for a time, hauling the lines back into the woods, did not eat enough hay and oats to maintain the local market in the woods.

Meanwhile on the farms themselves steam engines or Rumley oil pull engines were operating the threshing and hay-baling outfits and there were some other power-driven farm machines before the advent of the Fordson tractors in 1917. Trucks and cars were beginning to replace farm wagons and buggies after 1910. The Model T Ford was cheap enough to compete with a team of horses in cost and, unlike horses, it needed no fuel when it was not operating.

As the horse population declined everywhere during the same period there was no compensating use for oats. A milling company in Mount Vernon began grinding grain and making rolled oats a

Timothy hay harvest on Charles Elde farm.

*Photograph by Asahel Curtis*





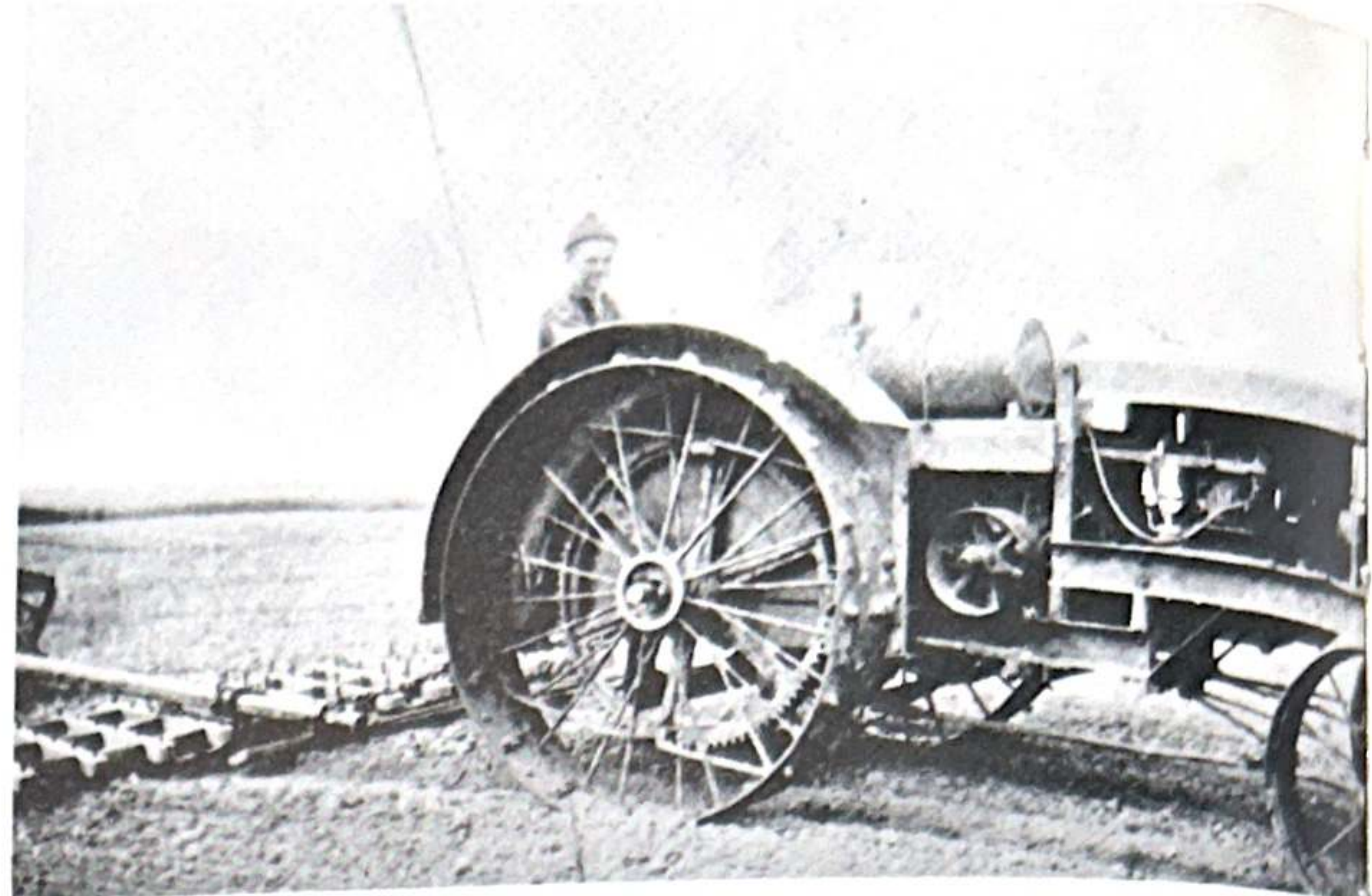


Haying on Everett ranch at Concrete in 1905. Bill Smith is at the reins, Warren Everett on the load. Beside the loaded wagon, l to r: 1, hired man; 2, Ed Everett; 3, Leonard Everett; 4, unidentified.

*Picture from Leonard Everett*

Storing loose hay in the hayloft of the Folsom barn about 1920. J. A. Folsom is on the hay wagon which is completely concealed by its load of hay.

*Picture from Ruth Folsom Thompson*



A Heider tractor about 1915, one of the first in the county.

*Picture from Alvord Summers*

little before 1920, but even as breakfast food oatmeal was meeting heavy competition from the new lines of cold cereals pioneered by the Kellogg Company in the early 1900s. Does anyone remember "Sunny Jim" who advertised a new cereal called "Force?" It had a rhyme which children echoed as they do TV commercials today, "Vigor and vim, vigor and vim, Force made him Sunny Jim."

Potatoes suffered no such decline in the total market but price fluctuations were very great since the crop cannot be carried over from one year to the next. The season of a large harvest would bring a glut and low prices which discouraged many men from planting the next spring with resulting scarcity and high prices. Some farmers had the knack of guessing right which way the price see-saw would go but many were discouraged.

Hay continued to be an important crop, increasingly for dairy herds and beef cattle rather than for horses. Because of its bulk most hay was fed locally instead of being shipped to or imported from some distant point, though it could be transported economically by water to cities in the area. As a cash crop it would not compete with oats and potatoes but it never lost its place as a useful source of income.

Vegetable seeds were one of the promising crops, first pioneered by the Tillinghasts at Padilla in the 1870s and the 1880s. Growing cabbage seed can be very profitable though it is subject to numerous hazards. The young plants, set out in the fall, must grow to the stage of loose heads before cold weather and a certain kind of winter freeze can ruin the crop. If the plants survive the winter they blossom and set seed the next spring; a very wet summer can make the ripening and threshing





**NOLTE BROS.**  
Wholesale and Retail  
**BUTCHERS,**  
NEW WHATCOM.

June 4<sup>th</sup> 1896  
Received from Sam Butler  
the Sum of One Hundred Thirty — Dollars,  
In full payment for one yoke red oxen  
Nolte Bros.

The Butler Logging Company was still buying oxen in 1896. Since the ox team was purchased from a butcher

it seems to mean that oxen might be either meat or draft animals by the middle nineties.

Receipt from Fred Butler

"Pride of Multnomah" potatoes raised by J. A. Folsom in 1920 when he rented the Nels Polson farm. The men in the picture are John Hedlund on the left, Aaire Boere on the right.

Picture from John Hedlund



Cultivating a field of potatoes with a two-horse team pulling the cultivator—both the driver and the team had to understand what they were doing. J. A. Folsom is doing the cultivating some time around 1920.

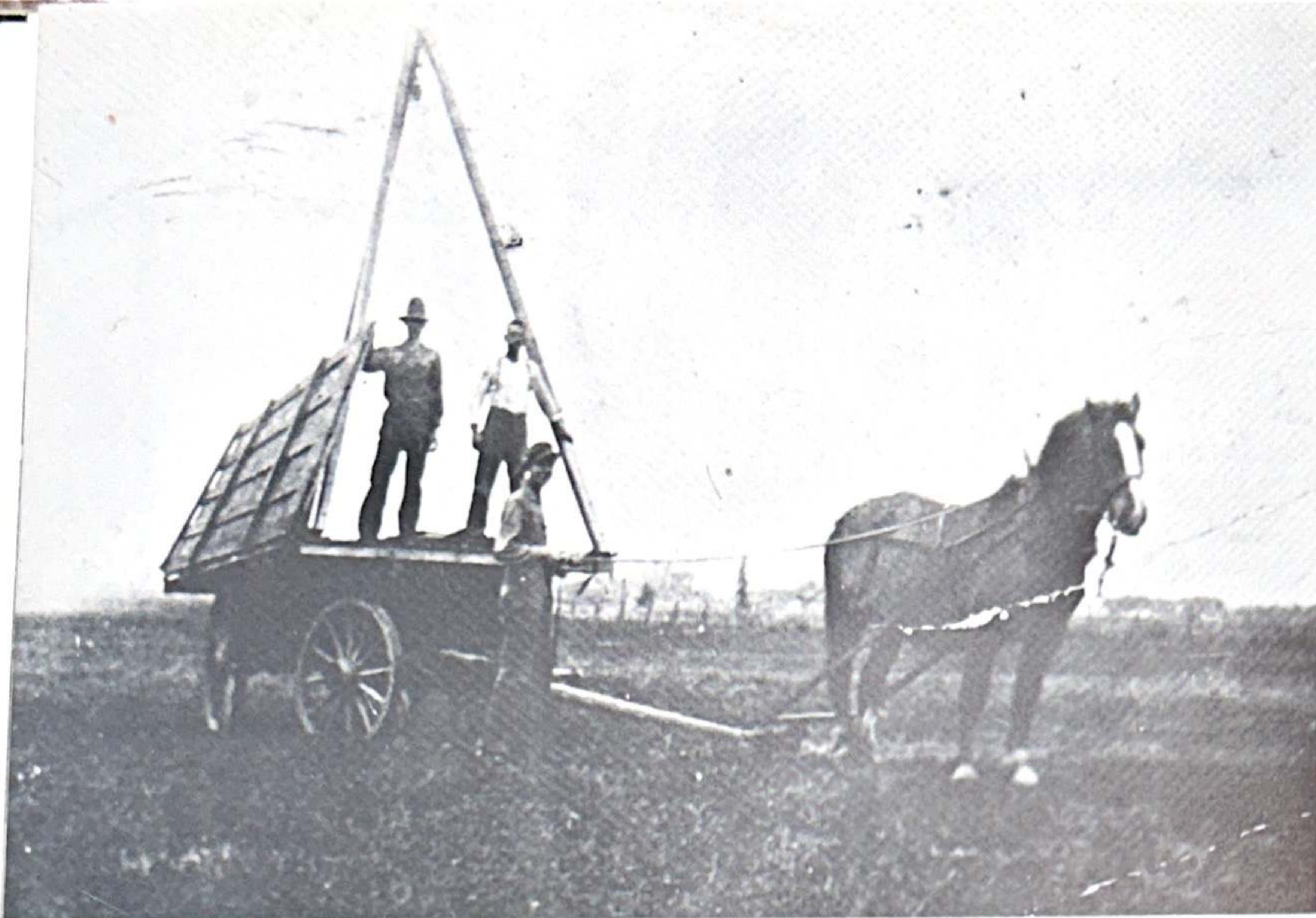
Picture from Ruth Folsom Thompson

Harvesting potatoes on the Folsom ranch about 1920. J. R. Folsom came from Maine and brought with him in 1909 his knowledge of potato growing. He brought Japanese to his ranch in Beaver Marsh for the digging and picking and used a low "jigger wagon" only 10 inches from the ground for picking up the sacks or barrels of potatoes.

Picture from Ruth Folsom Thompson



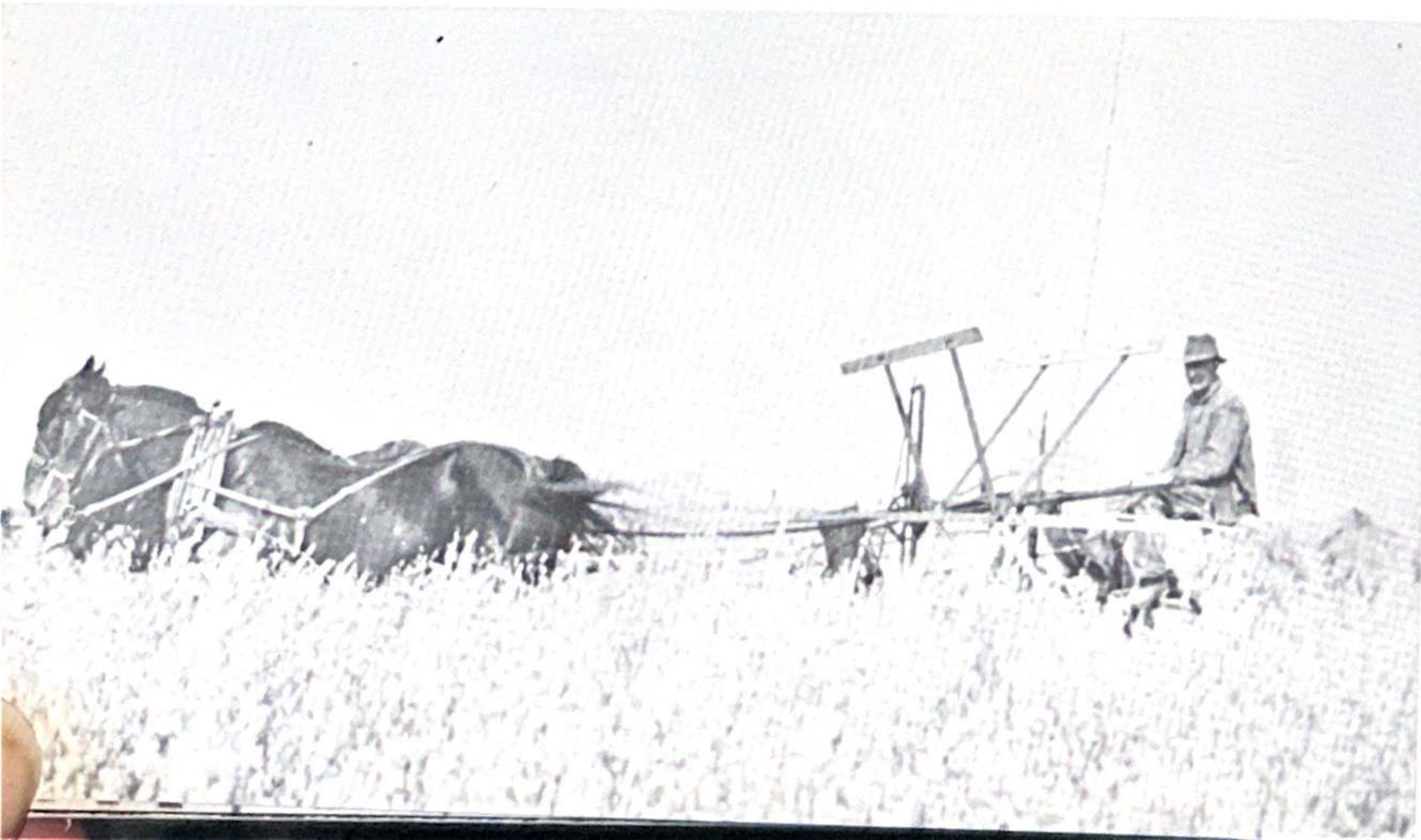




Special wagon attachment used in baling hay. This wagon was stationed next to the baler with the side board let down. In the field the haycocks were rolled onto flat sleds without runners which brought them to this wagon where the hay was pushed off by a pole in front of the sled and behind two posts set in the ground. A Jackson fork, attached to a pulley drawn by the horse, was used to pull the hay up on this wagon. From here a man separated the hay so that the one feeding the baler could more easily get the proper amount.  
*Picture from Anne Summers Carlson*

Binding oats in 1898 with each binder pulled by a four-horse team. Numbered men are identified: 1, Chet Nelson; 2, Arvid Hamburg; 3, Morris Nelson; 4, Henry Enquist; 5, Melvin Nelson; 6, Charles Nelson; 7, Will Worel; 8, M. P. Roth; 9, Frank Neslon.

*Picture from Grace Talin*



J. E. Carlson cutting oats with binder in 1920. Note the height of the grain in comparison with the horses.  
*Picture from Lou Carlson*



Threshing 1/2 mile northwest of Fredonia Grange Hall about 1916. The steam engine is an "Advance" type tandem compound. The men, l to r: 1, Harold Knudson; 4, Patrick Albert Callahan (in big hat); 10, Ed Callahan. Others unidentified.  
*Picture from John Ball*



of the seed difficult. Nonetheless cabbage seed has been one of the standard crops of the county from the earliest days.

In the second decade of this century many growers were experimenting with other seed crops — spinach, turnip, mustard, garden peas, sweet peas, cauliflower, and others — and meeting with both successes and failures. In 1921 they formed an organization, the Skagit County Seed Growers Association, to help each other in the production and marketing of their crops.

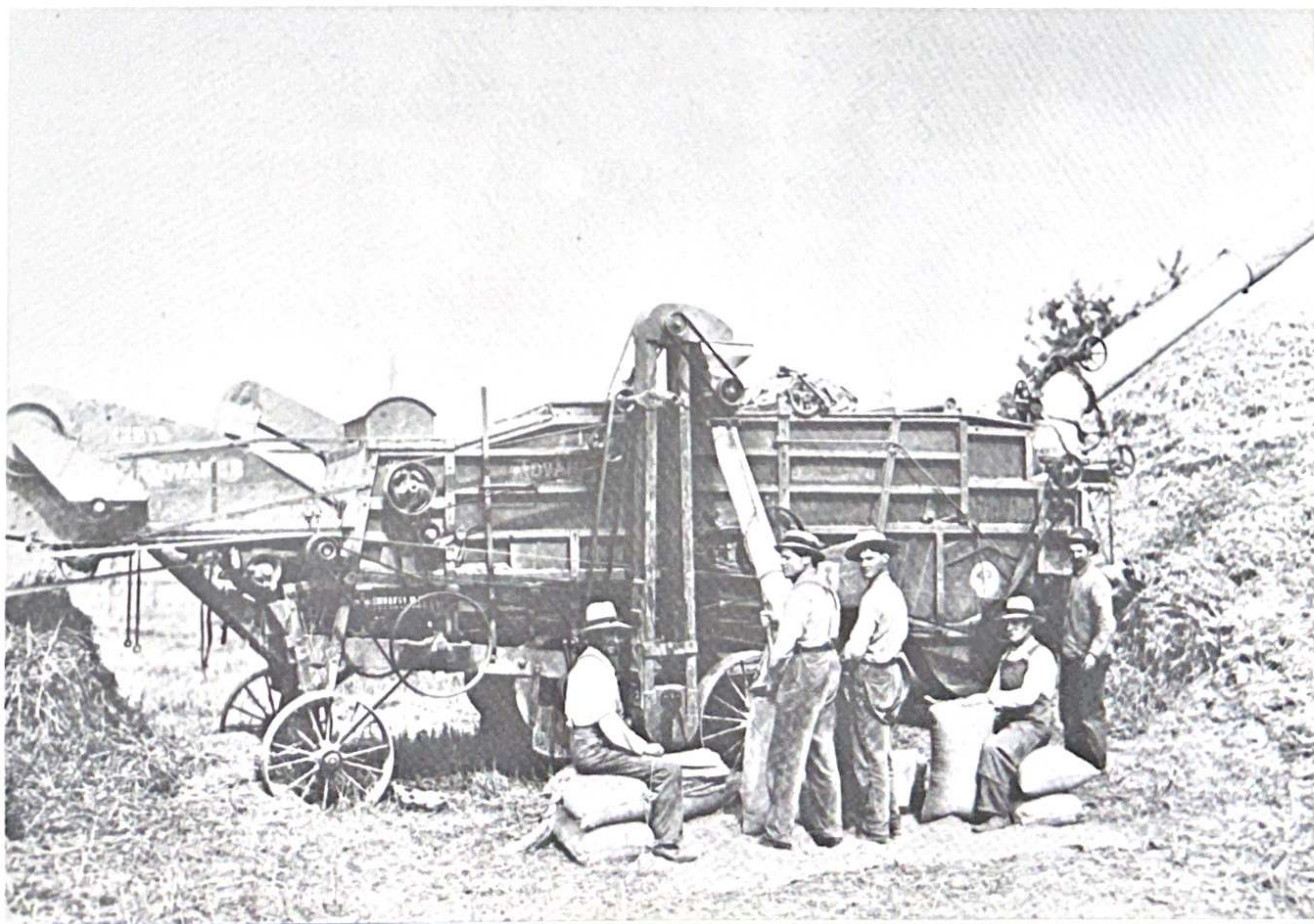
Bulb growing began locally in 1906 when Mrs. William Stewart planted tulips as a commercial venture. H. L. Willis, who arrived in the county in 1905 and bought stump land on the McLean Road just west of Mount Vernon, was interviewed

by the Mount Vernon Argus of that year and announced his interest in growing daffodils. However he did not actually start raising bulbs as early as the Stewarts. There was some slight increase in bulb culture during the ensuing years but Whidbey Island remained the principal center until World War II and the arrival of the Dutch bulb growers whose blossoming fields now make the Skagit flats such a breath-taking sight in the spring.

The egg and poultry industry also began as a commercial operation about 1910, gradually displacing the free-running farm flock in which the next generation was brought up by a mother hen who had hatched either her own eggs or a clutch from some superior breed placed in her nest. Commercially, incubators took the place of broody hens

The machine is threshing oats behind the Anderson barn about 1910. The clean oats come down the pipe at the center and fill the sack on one side which is then lifted over to the seated man, the sack sewer. Meanwhile the oats run into the sack on the other side till it is full. The stream of oats is continuous so the four men must be quick and accurate in their movements. The straw is being blown onto the stack through the large pipe at the upper right. Men l to r are: Perry Pearson, Carl Allquist, Emil Allquist, unidentified man, and Jack Reay.

*Picture from Carl Anderson*







Field of cabbage seed. John Thulen and Emil Thulen in foreground. J. O. Rudene home on Pleasant Ridge is in

the background.

*Picture from Anne Carlson*

A portion of the Puget Sound Seed Gardens at La Conner in August, 1892, showing the hand threshing of cabbage

seed with flails on canvas. The men are A. G. Tillinghast, F. L. Baily, John Siegfried, and Ed Sisson.

*Picture from Grace Talin*







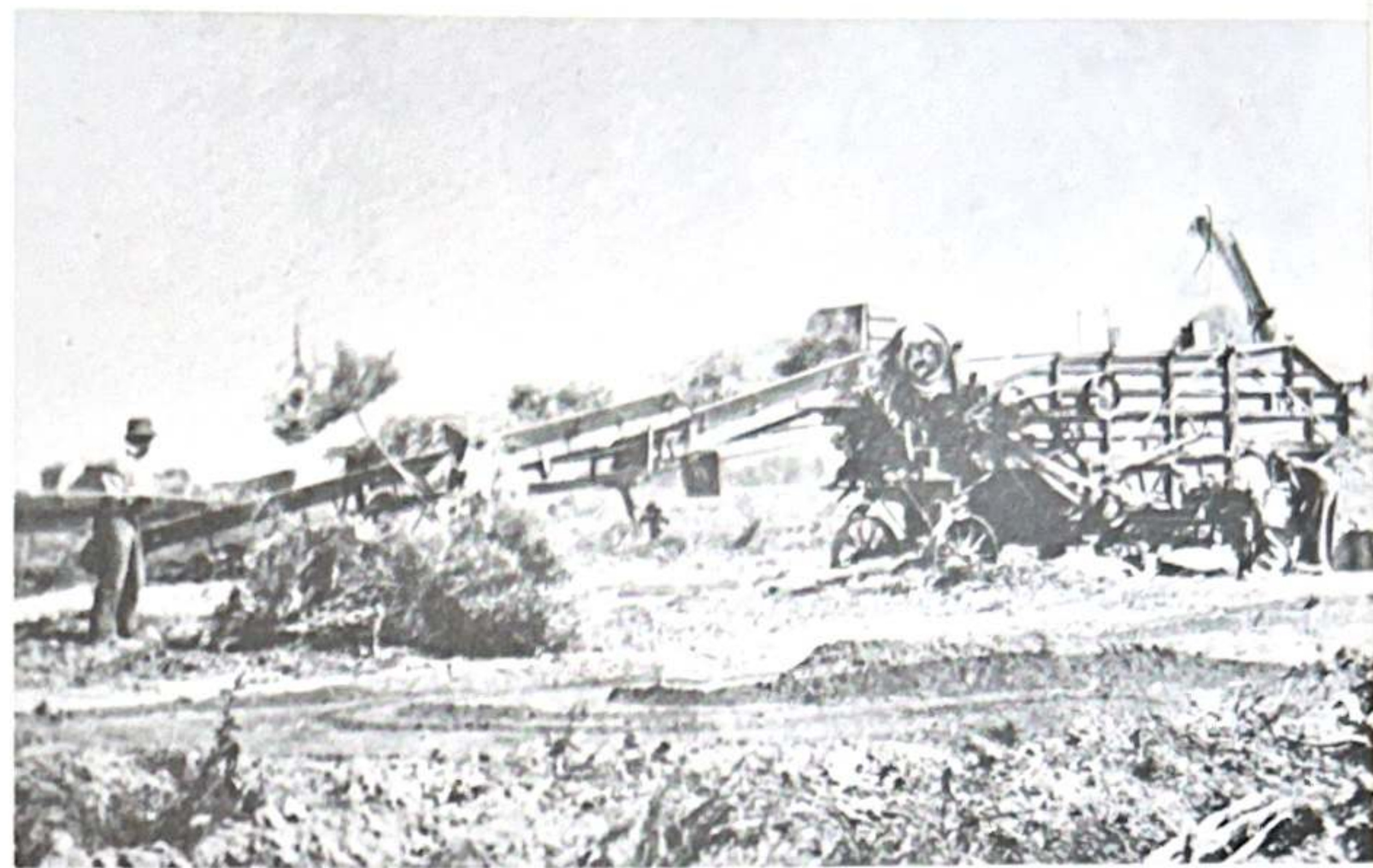
Threshing cabbage seed about 1916. Ripe stalks were brought to the machine, hauled in canvas containers on horse-drawn sleds. At the machine the containers were overturned and the stalks pitched onto a conveyor belt which carried them into the thresher.

*Picture from Mabel Bessner Reedy*

and baby chicks were brought up by the hundreds in brooder houses till they were old enough for the farmer to distinguish the cockerels from the pullets. Then the males were raised for frying chickens and the females for laying hens. Some time around 1920 the Japanese learned to distinguish the sex of newly hatched chicks and it became possible for the poultryman to specialize in producing fryers or laying hens. With many ups and downs the poultry industry has continued without any great expansion or catastrophic decline since its beginning.

Hop growing was a big money producer in the valley for years, beginning with the Williamson hop ranch at Lyman in the 1880s and continuing in many locations on delta land until state-wide prohibition in 1916. The hop fields with their lush vines growing up tall poles and along wires to shade the ground almost completely were a beautiful feature of the early landscape. The picking was done by large crews after the vines were lowered from the poles. Sometimes the pickers were townspeople, often whole families, but usually they were Indians, either local or from British Columbia. They came in family and tribal groups in their canoes and set up their camps near the hop fields much as they had formerly done on their summer food-gathering expeditions. The employer had no responsibility for housing or sanitary facilities or policing of any kind.

After the hops were picked they were dried in



Pitching the cabbage stalks onto the belt which carried them into the threshing machine. Notice that a large tarpaulin is spread on the ground under both the belt and the machine—cabbage seed is very fine and very valuable so it was important to catch the seeds which scattered before reaching the machine.

*Picture from Mabel Bessner Reedy*

hop houses by the heat of wood fires in stoves. When Charlie Storrs' hop house burned in 1908 during the harvest the Indians saved the barn nearby by swarming over the roof with buckets of water and wet gunny sacks and slapping out the fires started by falling embers.

Another kind of crop occasionally grown was the medicinal herb, either ginseng which was used by the Chinese, or golden seal, valued by the American pharmaceutical industry. Both required semi-shade supplied by a forest of poles supporting slats which formed stripes of light and shade over the entire field. This made them very specialized crops.

Fruit growing for family use was important in the country from the beginning because fruits are easy to grow but difficult to ship. All the pioneer homes had orchards at the earliest practicable moment. Washington has native low-growing blackberries but new and larger kinds, the Evergreens and the Himalayas, were imported for the home gardens from the east; both rapidly went wild, thanks to the birds. The wild blackcaps which were very small were replaced in gardens by larger luscious varieties. Red raspberries and strawberries were commonly grown. There was some commercial distribution of berries from fields near the stopping places of steamers, but it was not until railroads gave rapid access to city markets that growing fresh fruits on a commercial scale became feasible. The Pacific Fruit and Produce Company





The Skagit County Seed Growers Association as it was organized in 1920. Front row, l to r: 1, Rasmus Koudal; 2, Will Downey; 3, Lou Maupin; 4, J. M. Shields; 5, Jim Hayton; 6, H. L. Willis; 7, Albert Church. Second row, l to r: 1, unidentified; 2, John Peth; 3, Frank Maupin; 4, unidentified; 5, John Hansen; 6, Morris Jensen; 7, unidentified; 8, Gust Magnuson; 9, Hans Jensen; 10, John Oakland; 11, Ralph McKibben; 12, Lou Jennings; 13, Bill Jennings. Third row, l to r: 1 and 2, unidentified; 3, Joe Wilson; 4, John Conrad; 5, unidentified; 6, Charles Nelson; 7, 8, 9 and 10, unidentified; 11, Perry Pearson;

12, Axel Anderson; 13, Ollie Currier. Fourth row, l to r: 1, Elmer Hanson; 2, Ben Lind; 3, unidentified; 4, Ored Oredson; 5, Henning Larson; 6, John Knudson; 7, Frank Leamer; 8, Matt Bessner; 9, Anthony Barrett; 10, Antone Swanson; 11, unidentified; 12, Charles Olsen; 13, J. Arthur Johnson; 14, unidentified. Back row, l to r: 1, Art Anderson; 2, unidentified; 3, Antone Pearson; 4, unidentified; 5, Walter Liddell; 6, Olaf Paulson; 7, Carl Johnson; 8, Tom Dennis; 9, Clements Thein; 10, John Summers; 11, 12 and 13, unidentified; 14, Carl Kallstrom.

*Picture from Margaret Maupin*

Harvest time at Judge Power's hop ranch near La Conner around the turn of the century. The people are l to r: Mrs. Dahlbom, Mr. Sandell, Alex Sandell, Echo Edmonds,

Edward Summers, Mrs. Ed Summers, Leona Edmonds, Gus Rudene, Mrs. Edmonds, Mr. Edmonds.

*Picture from Grace Talin*







H. A. HUTCHISON & SONS' CELERY RANCH—located on the outskirts of Mt. Vernon. These gentlemen grow the finest celery on the Pacific coast, and ship their product to Seattle, Tacoma, Dawson, Nome, and other points in Alaska.

H. A. Hutchison and Sons celery patch in early 1900s.  
*Reproduced for the Ronald Holttum collection from  
 Sebring's SKAGIT COUNTY ILLUSTRATED, 1903*

was the marketing outlet for the berry crops after about 1910.

The drying of prunes and other fruits seemed like a good way to avoid the difficulties in handling perishable fresh fruits. Whitney, Sisson, and Tillinghast had planned orchards for their newly diked salt marshes in 1873 and actually planted the trees but lost them all as the first dikes broke and let in salt water. A promoter who expected to dry prunes contracted with the Sharpes to plant a prune orchard at Rosario but the promoter and his company vanished before the trees came into bearing. J. F. Gass on Fir Island planted a similar orchard and dried and shipped the prunes himself but marketing difficulties ended his venture in the twenties. Apples for home and local use were always important but they never became a commercial success because eastern Washington specialized in that field. The story for pears and cherries was essentially the same.

Market gardening, particularly of celery, was pursued by R. E. Beatty and a few other people for a time with much hard work and considerable success. H. L. Willis grew rhubarb which found a market in Alaska and Montana and was shipped in occasional carload lots to Minneapolis and even to New Jersey when a very early spring in Washington came the same year as a very late one in the middle west and east. However, the lush fields around Sumner and Puyallup raised as good vegetables and rhubarb as Skagit County and the farmers there were better organized for marketing purposes, so these beginnings dwindled and disappeared in the twenties.

There were always some hogs raised in the county from the earliest days, usually a small number on a farm which had all kinds of domestic animals. No one made a specialty out of swine to the exclusion of other crops and animals.



The Holtcamp pig house, one of the original buildings on the pioneer farm near Sedro Woolley, built of hand-split timbers and shakes.

*From William Holtcamp*



Home slaughtering was common on farms at the turn of the century; hogs are shown in this picture. Chickens were commonly dressed at home long after farmers had learned to go to meat markets for beef and pork.

*Picture from Mabel Reedy*

Horse breeding also interested many men in the country, breeding for racing which was promoted at a race track at LaConner and at county fairs, for heavy work, and occasionally for carriage horses, riding horses, or Shetland ponies as hobbies. Few people in the flats, however, were concerned with any kinds of horses except the general purpose farm horse which pulled the carriage when not pulling a plow or a reaper. Along the upper Skagit the horses were pack ponies, light and agile small horses which could negotiate steep trails with heavy loads for the mines and camps deep in the woods. In build and ancestry they were close to the cayuses, the Indian ponies, which had been brought across the passes from eastern Washington in the days before the railroads.

The farm operation which grew and prospered, in spite of many difficulties, was dairying and cattle raising. From the earliest days every family had at least one cow as soon as there was pasture among the stumps; the cow was half the





Threshing oats back of the Anderson barn in 1910 using George Reay's machine. The wagons on each side of the thresher in the background have hauled bundles of oats from the field and the men are pitching them on a moving belt. Straw is blown out of the tube at upper

right to make the straw stack; the oats run down and are caught in sacks. In the foreground of picture are Carl Lindbloom, Carl Anderson, Al Brandt, Jack Reay, "ma, dad, and Aust," Gladys Reay, Minnie Allquist, Mrs. Johnson (tall woman third from end).

*Picture from Carl Anderson*

family's living. As fast as more pasture could be cleared of bushes and the heifer calves grew up the herd was increased. Ten to 20 cows constituted a large herd and only a few people had as many as 30 before the days of milking machines; beyond that number problems of milking and marketing became critical. In a family herd every cow had a name and was a personality, almost a member of the family.

No farm animal is so well equipped as the cow to insure that she gets what she wants when she wants it. If the milk supply is to keep up she must be milked on a regular schedule twice a day in surroundings familiar to her and in a manner to which she is accustomed. She must be in a calm and relaxed frame of mind — the Carnation Contented Cow is no myth. If there is anything going on which she does not like she can hold back her milk and if general conditions do not suit her she will retaliate by regularly giving less milk.

Chores began the farm day ordinarily no later than 5 A.M., a pleasant enough hour in the summer but long before sunrise in the winter months. Whoever got up first lighted a lamp, kindled a fire in the kitchen stove, lighted a lantern for the trip to the outdoor toilet and for the barn work, primed the pump, and pumped the water by hand for washing, watering the stock, and filling the pail to be carried into the house. A few prosperous farmers had windmills which pumped water to an elevated tank from which it flowed by gravity to the house and barn but they were a small minority. Electric pumps were not yet available and even if they had been few farms had electricity until almost 1920. As soon as gasoline motors were adapted to driving pumps between 1905 and 1915 some farmers installed them, and in places near

running streams versatile homesteaders found time and ways to bring running water to their houses and barns. The eagerness with which people sought ways to obtain water is an indication of the tediousness of the chore of pumping it by hand.

When the milker — the farmer, his son, or the hired man — opened the barn door all the cows came in, always in the same order and each to her own stanchion. Any cow who tried to take another's turn at the watering trough, going through the door, or in her stanchion was disciplined by her offended sister. Fodder and the peace and relative warmth of the barn set the tone for the milking. The milker, however, had to have a soothing manner, quick reflexes, and experience to be sure that no cow kicked over the milk pail or put her foot in it. Every cow had to be stripped carefully for the last milk is the richest — cream rises even in the cow's udder.

Not all the cattle were milkers. Before 1890 beef was very expensive; heifer calves were raised for milk cows and the bull calves became the oxen which did the heavy hauling on the farms and in the woods. As the numbers of horses increased and the demand for oxen as draft animals declined, steers were raised for beef. Stockmen tried to develop a dual purpose breed, good for both beef and milk, by breeding their shorthorn cows to Holstein bulls but got instead an animal which was not good for either role. By 1920 there were almost equal numbers of beef and dairy cattle in the county, the beef cattle shorthorns or some other kind of heavy meat producer, the dairy herds of Holsteins, Jerseys, or Guernseys. The bull calves of the dairy breeds were sold for veal to the stockmen, if they were willing to raise them, or knocked on the head by their owners if they could not be



sold. Since the calves did the milking of beef cows it was easier to handle large herds. All the farms in the flats were fenced and had gates along the roads so it was possible to drive the cattle to market, a common sight on country roads.

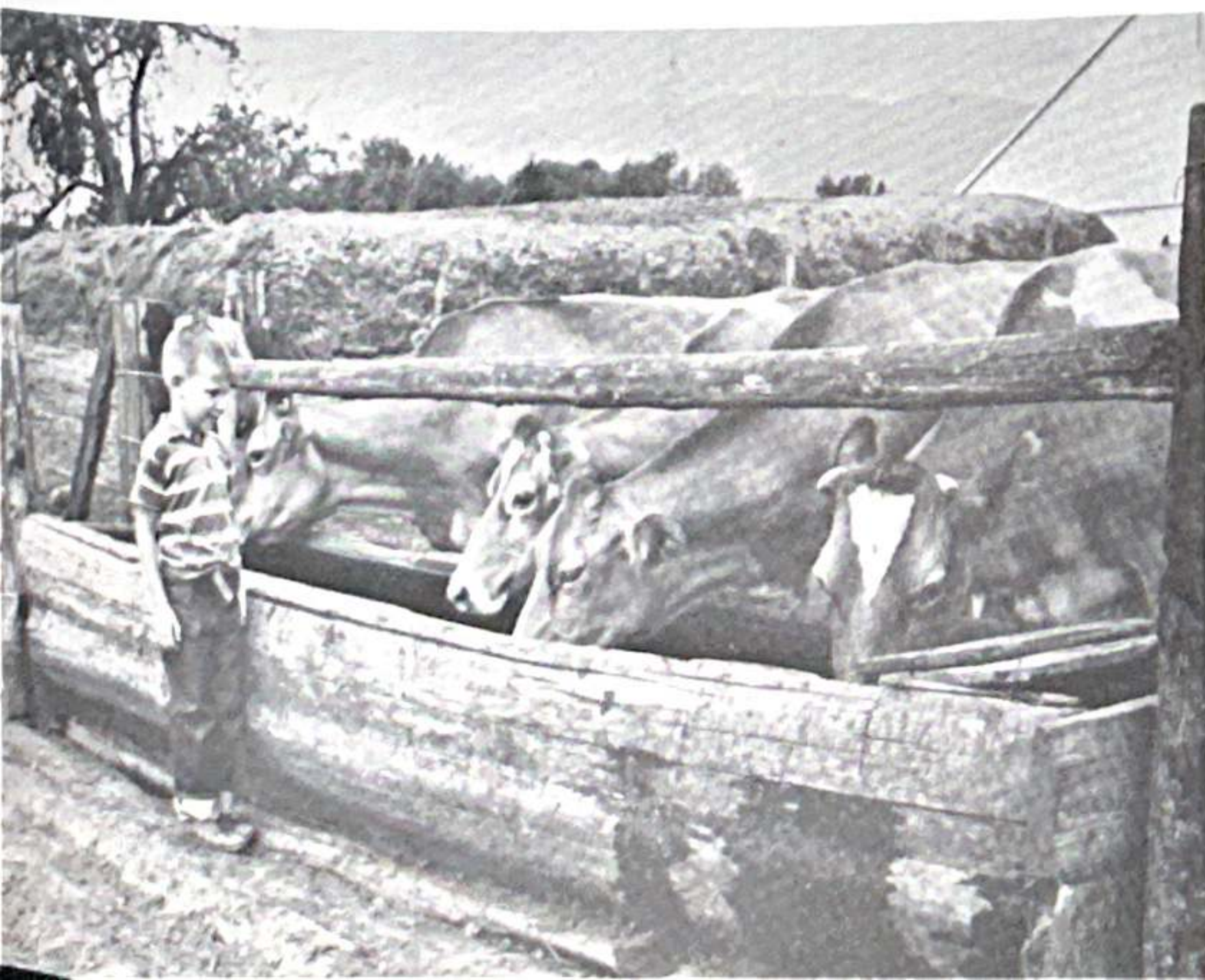
How the fresh milk from the dairy cows was handled depended on the period, the size of the herd, the distance to a market, and the progress of the dairy industry in the vicinity. Everywhere at first, and in the remoter areas for a very long time, the warm milk was placed in shallow pans in a cool place for several hours to allow the cream to rise. The cream was put aside and the skim milk fed to pigs or calves or chickens, or made into cheese. When enough cream had been accumulated it was churned into butter. It did not matter if the cream had soured; sour cream churned easily and if the butter was well washed no sour taste remained after it was salted and shaped in a butter mold. It was then ready to be sold at a logging camp or traded at the store for the essentials that could not be produced on the farm.

There were other morning chores around the barn in addition to milking. All the farm animals had to be fed and watered, the horses in the stable and pigs in the pig house or sty, the chickens in the chicken house. If there were sheep they had been shut up for the night to protect them from dogs or predatory animals, so they had to be fed, watered, and turned out to pasture. On short winter days some of these barn chores would have to wait until after breakfast when daylight came.

Dairy chores in the house included washing and scalding milk pails, pans, strainers, separators and cans. Hand operated cream separators, De Laval and other makes, were appearing about 1910

Typical of the watering troughs used on most farms for many years is this hollow log with the ends boarded up. This one was in use on the Holtcamp place until the late 1960s. The little boy is James Holtcamp.

*Picture from William Holtcamp*



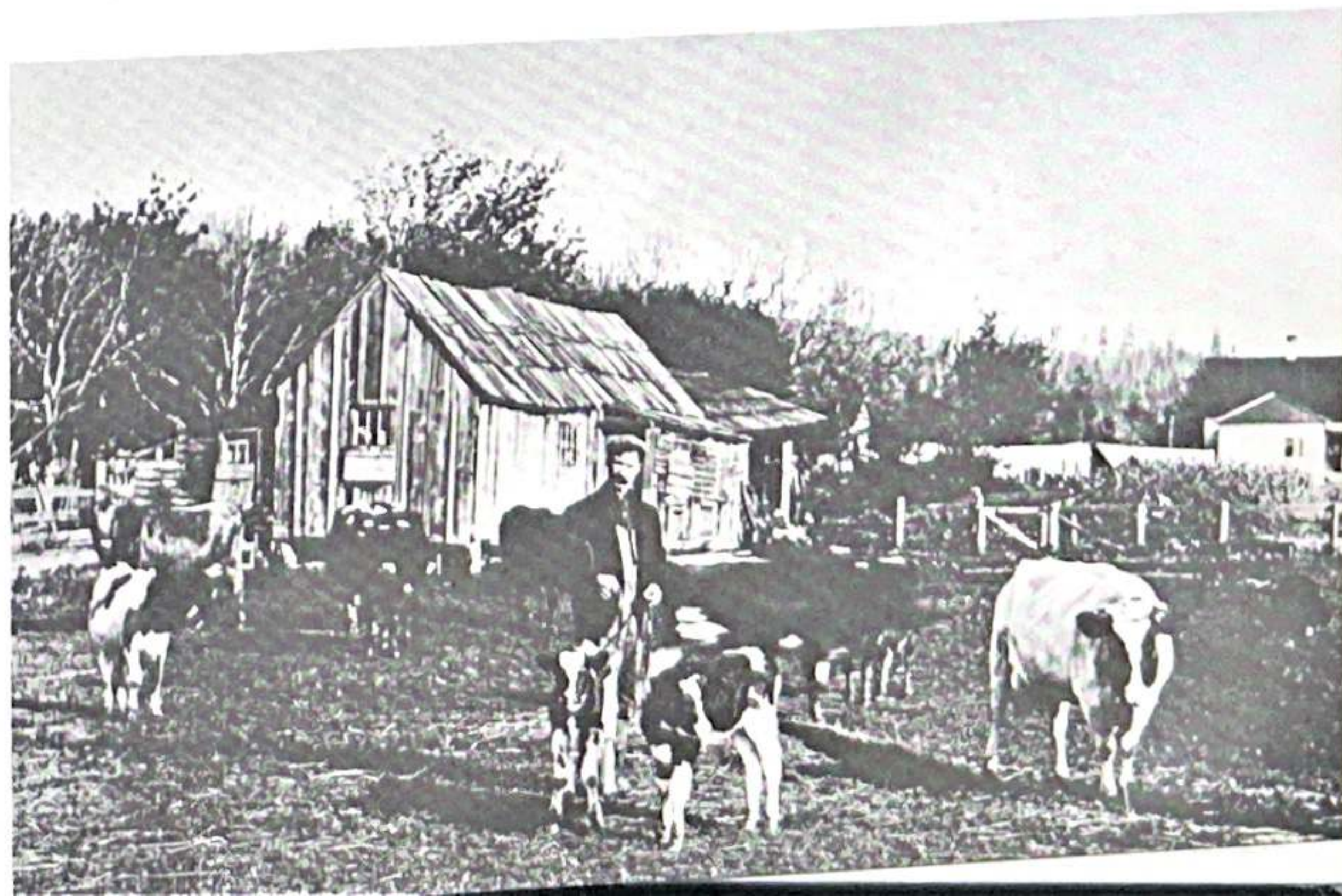
and making the slow natural rising of cream in pans unnecessary but substituting for that chore another one — the laborious washing and sterilizing of the many parts of the complex separator.

All the early publications about Skagit County emphasize how ideally it is fitted for dairying: pastures green all the year, other necessary feed grown locally, etc. In the beginning the cash income from cows came from the butter, either traded at the store or sold to the camps. The hard times which began nationwide in 1893 depressed this market for several years but the Alaska gold rush in the 1890s created a suddenly increased demand which quickly outstripped the production of the farm kitchens. Creameries were opened at many places in the county and increasingly the cream from the larger herds went to them. The 1906 HISTORY OF SKAGIT AND SNOHOMISH COUNTIES purports to list the businesses and their owners in each town and it names only three — the Mount Vernon Creamery, "the largest in the county, manufacturing 16,000 pounds of butter a month;" the Sedro Woolley creamery; and the Edison creamery "which paid out \$400 a week for cream." Our pictures show four others, not listed in the book: the Pleasant Ridge Creamery Company at Rexville (W. J. Cornelius and J. O. Rudene); the Hamilton Cheese Factory (L. Gastrill); the Finstad and Utgard Creamery at Conway, and the Olympic Ridge Creamery and Cheese Factory of J. H. Knutzen and Sons, in operation when the book was published, though the building burned soon afterward. There were certainly some others operating in the county.

An important change in handling dairy products began in 1906 when a Swiss named Leon

A. J. Lawson about 1910 with two registered Holstein calves, the product of cows purchased from the John L. Smith consignment to the 1909 sale held at the A.Y.P. Fairgrounds in Seattle. The old house in the background, built of rough lumber and shakes by Ed Stevens, was papered with old newspapers bearing Civil War dates. The fleas were so bad in the house that Mr. Lawson finally burned it.

*Picture from Willard Lawson*



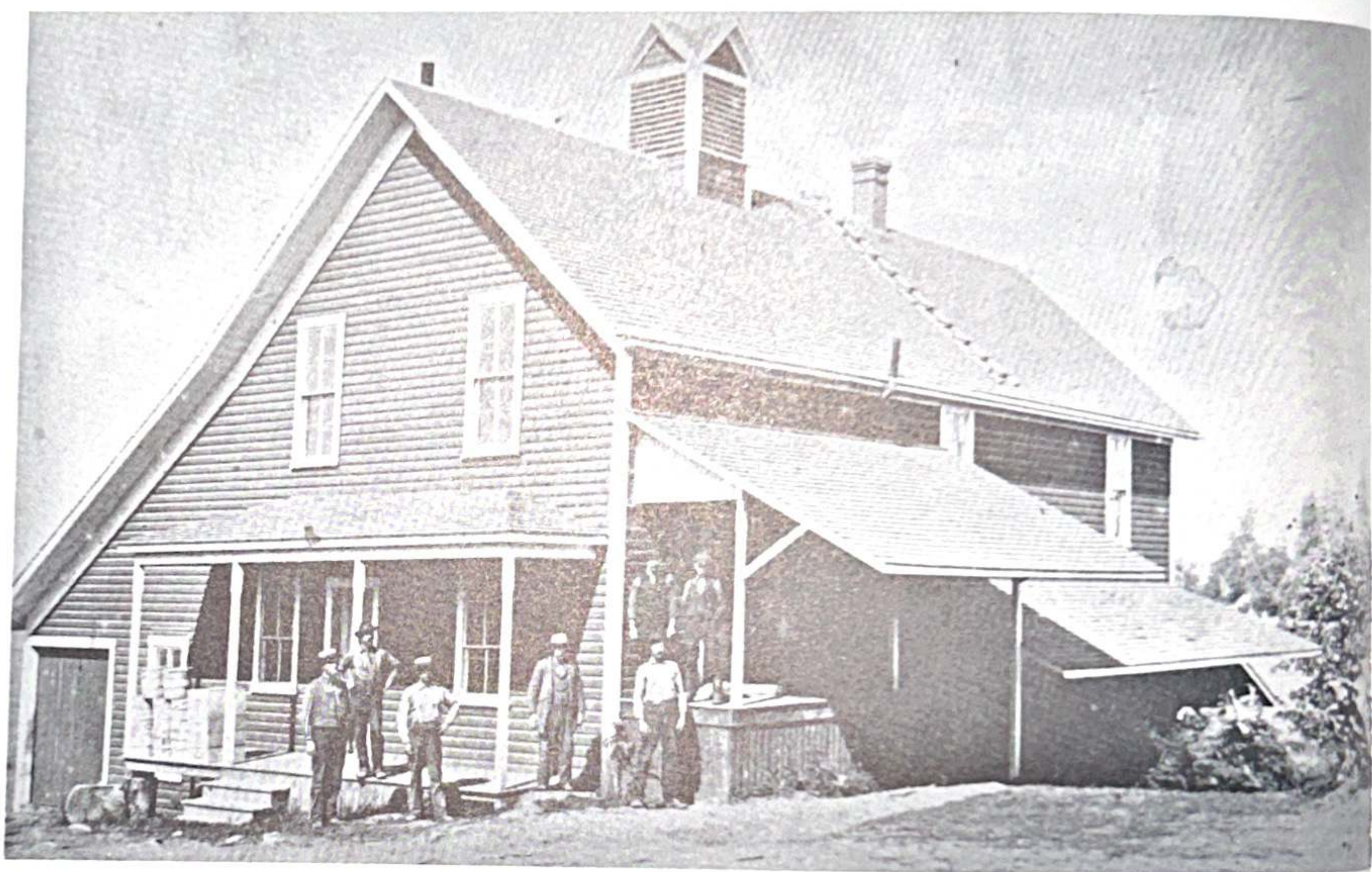




The Olympic Ridge Creamery and Cheese Factory of J. H. Knutzen and Sons about 1900. It stood on the east edge of the ridge overlooking Olympia Marsh. The creamery burned in 1906 and was not rebuilt.  
Picture from Jess Knutzen

The Rexville Creamery before 1900. It stood on the south end of Pleasant Ridge next to the Rexville School. Front, l to r: J. O. Rudene, unidentified, unidentified, Peter Olson, Charles Nelson. On the platform Nels Larson and Carl Johnson.

Picture from Richard Larson



Hamilton Cheese Factory in the early 1900s. The whey which was a by-product of the cheese making was returned to any farmers who could use it for feed. The excess was dumped into a ditch from which it drained slowly toward the river. All the neighbors complained of the smell but the County Health Department considered smells outside its province.

Picture from Leta Richardson Steen



The Mount Vernon Cream Company, the first condenser in town as it appeared in 1909. It was opened in 1906, suffered a fire that same year, and reopened in 1907. The wagons are delivering 10-gallon cans of milk. At the extreme right the building abuts on the river so the sternwheelers could carry away the cases of canned milk. The road is on top of the dike. Driver of 2nd team on left is James Jensen. Officers of company were: President M. Fredenhagen; Vice-President, Leon Chevally; Secretary and Treasurer, E. P. Barker.

*Picture from  
Mr. Fredenhagen*



Chevally opened the first condenser in the county, the Mount Vernon Cream Company on the bank of the Skagit where Stokeley-Van Camp now stands. The process of evaporating and canning milk was just being refined and for many years enthusiasts believed that condensed milk would replace fresh milk in the American market. The idea sounds strange today but in the days before pasteurization and refrigeration fresh milk was very hard to handle and often spoiled. The plant of the Mount Vernon Cream Company burned in 1906 but was rebuilt and reopened in 1907.

In 1906 the plant of the Pacific Coast Condensed Milk Company was built in Mount Vernon on the river bank directly north of the bridge and within a hundred yards of the Great Northern track, thus having convenient access to all the means of transportation, water, rail, and road. It began operation in 1907, sending out wagons over regular routes through the region to collect the 10-gallon milk cans from farmers' milk stands in the morning and return them, washed and sterilized, in the afternoon in time for the evening milking. A little sternwheeler, captained by Joe Fredericks, even made a daily run to Oak Harbor for a few years to bring Whidbey Island milk to the condenser. Some milk came on the early morning train, the Owl or milk train, which stopped at more places than any other. Dairy farmers were delighted at the idea of two condensers and many creameries competing for their milk. Dairy herds grew and new problems arose.

The first cows in the valley had all been grade stock, mixed breeds, anything available. The first

herd of purebred stock in the county and apparently in the state was owned by Reverend B. N. L. Davis of Riverside who imported a carload of registered Holsteins from Illinois in the late 1880s. He was a Baptist minister as well as a farmer, always on call in an emergency. In 1891, summoned in the night in freezing weather to comfort a dying woman, he contracted pneumonia and died. The Holsteins were sold at auction and it was another 10 or 20 years before serious attention was given to improving dairy cattle.

While farmers knew at milking time which cows were good producers and which gave only a few quarts, few of them kept records to show whether a particular cow was profitable. Testing for butterfat was just beginning in the 1890s. The Sears and Roebuck catalog of 1897 offers Babcock testers, evidence that some individuals were starting to compare the productivity of their cows. Information about cattle testing and breeding was spread by farm journals, Granges, farmers' cooperatives, the Carnation Company, early agricultural courses in high schools, and by the increasing numbers of agricultural graduates of Washington State College at Pullman.

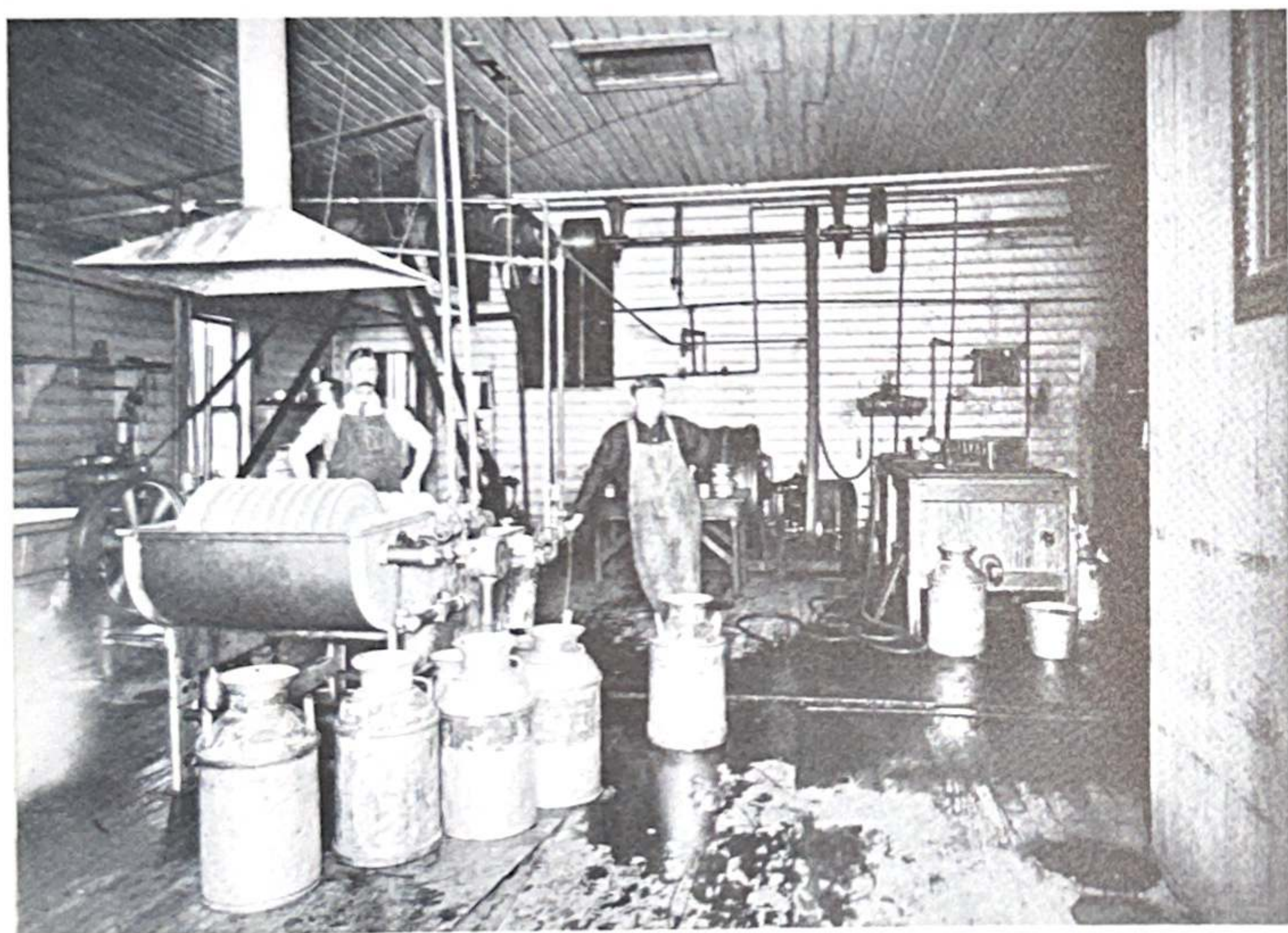
J. H. Knutzen and his seven sons had come to Skagit County from Denmark in 1891. One son went back to Denmark to study the accumulated experience of that dairy country while another gathered all the information which Pullman had to offer. Will Knutzen's name is prominent in all the efforts to improve the county dairy industry. The Carnation Company kept a herd of fine cattle at Carnation east of Seattle and spread the doc-





Finstad and Utgard Creamery at Conway. Coit Utgard at far right, Robert Hanstad in doorway. Others not identified. This plant made cheese as well as butter and specialized in Scandinavian cheeses.

*Picture from Ragna Moore*



Inside the Finstad and Utgard Creamery at Conway. Primost, a Scandinavian cheese, was made here as well as Rainbow Cottage Cheese. Men are Mr. Brevick and Robert Hanstad.

*Picture from Ragna Moore*

The Finstad and Utgard Creamery at Conway sometime before 1920. L to r: Robert Hanstad, unidentified, Sivert Ranes, A. M. Brevick, Coit Utgard.

*From Ragna Moore*



trine that the key to herd improvement was through tested sires whose daughters had proved that the bull transmitted the desired qualities.

After 1900, herds of purebred Holsteins, Jerseys, and Guernseys began to replace the hodgepodge of mixed breeds which had been typical of the earlier period. Even the farmers who could not afford an immediate transition to a purebred herd improved their stock by using better sires.

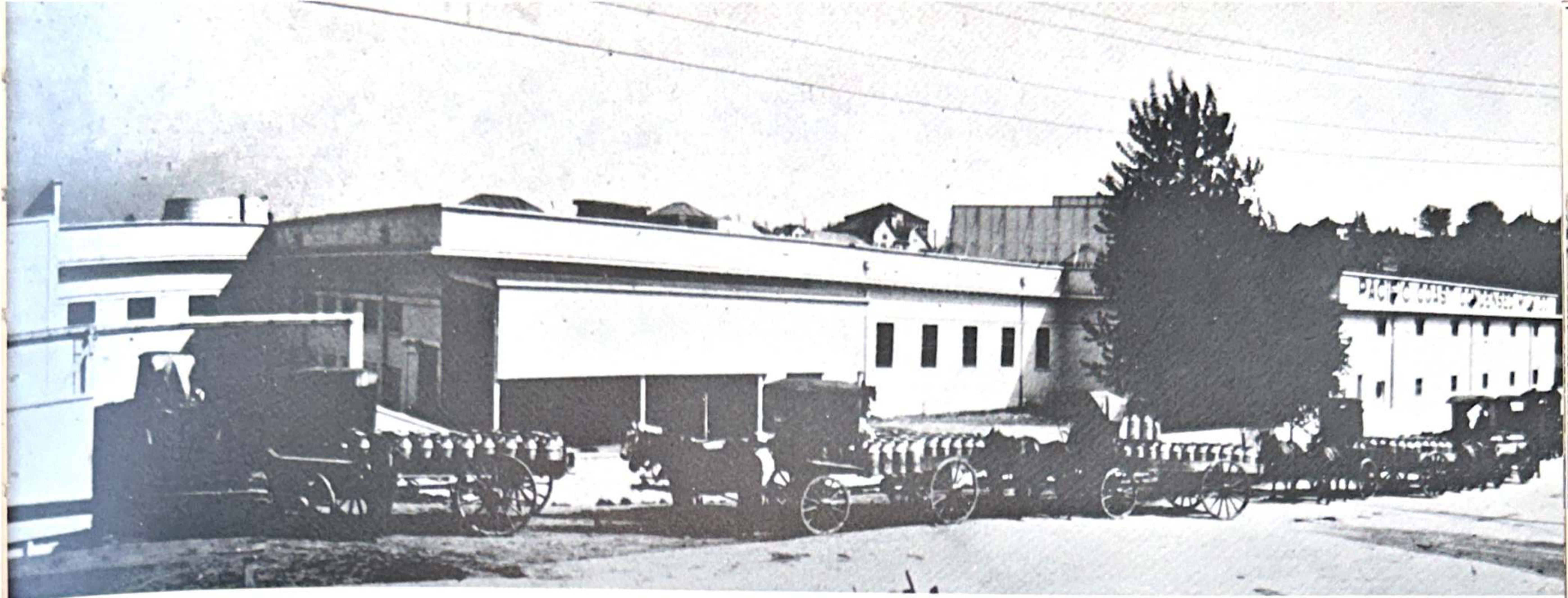
Dairy farmers were making their first efforts to organize around 1910, spurred by the knowledge that dairying should be more efficient and profitable but not at all sure of what should be done first. The Skagit County Dairymen's Association reorganized in early 1911 with plans to improve herds by systematic testing. The passage of a state law providing for compulsory T.B. testing sharply divided the members; all infected cattle were destroyed with compensation which the owners regarded as inadequate. The farmers had been only mildly interested in testing for disease, not realizing its seriousness for both cattle and humans. They wanted to test for butterfat content to help them discover which cows were "boarders" and which were profitable. The dispute apparently stymied the new organization.

In the following years local groups organized cooperative creameries in Mount Vernon, Burlington, and Edison with the idea of giving farmers a better price for their milk and cream. These ventures gave hard lessons and good business experience to those trying to run them but did not solve the dairymen's problems.

Testing was revived in 1916 when the Skagit County Cow Testing Association was founded with Peter Samuelson as president, Tom Lockhart as vice-president, and J. B. Hall as secretary-treasurer; the directors were Andrew Anderson, A. E. Carlson, J. H. Hulbert, and Will Knutzen. Reports telling which cows had made outstanding records and who owned them were published regularly in the newspapers through the rest of the decade. This organization appears to be the direct ancestor of the Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) which still functions.

The quality of herds and the production per cow was improving but milk prices were so low that dairymen believed they were losing money and blamed the condensers. In 1914 the Mount Vernon Cream Company, the "little condenser," advertised for suppliers and in 1915 it raised the price it paid in three steps from \$1.45 to \$1.75 a hundred, a price which Carnation had to match but which farmers still did not consider sufficient.

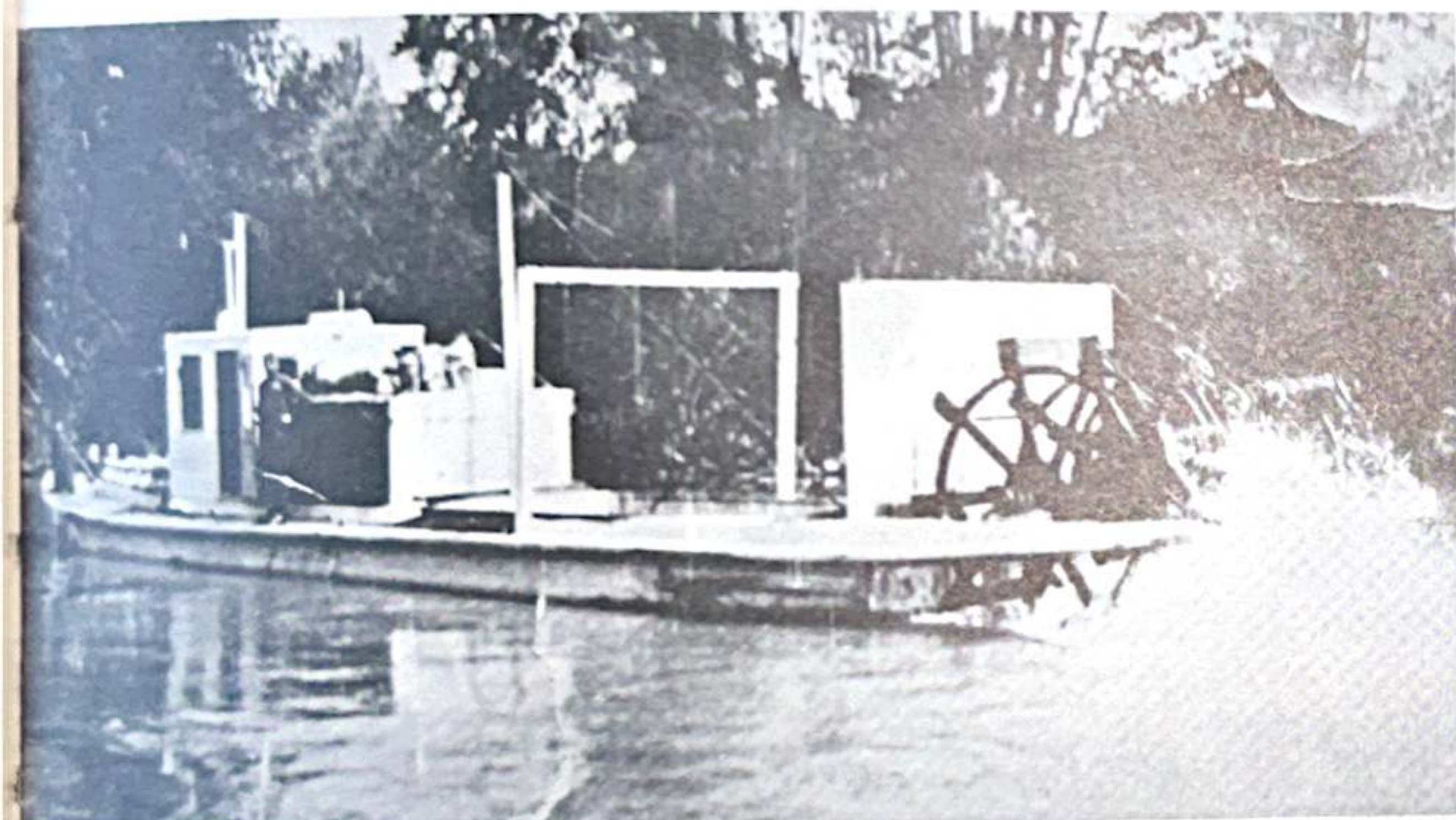




Milk wagons lined up in front of the Pacific Coast Condensed Milk Co. (Carnation) to unload the milk picked up that morning from the farmers' milk stands along the road. After the cans were emptied they were washed and sterilized and the wagons took them back to the milk

stands in time for the evening milking. The approach to the bridge is at the left front of the picture. The odd contraption in the center behind the rail is the barricade which shut off the bridge approach when the bridge was opened.

*Picture from the Carnation Co., courtesy of R. K. Fort*

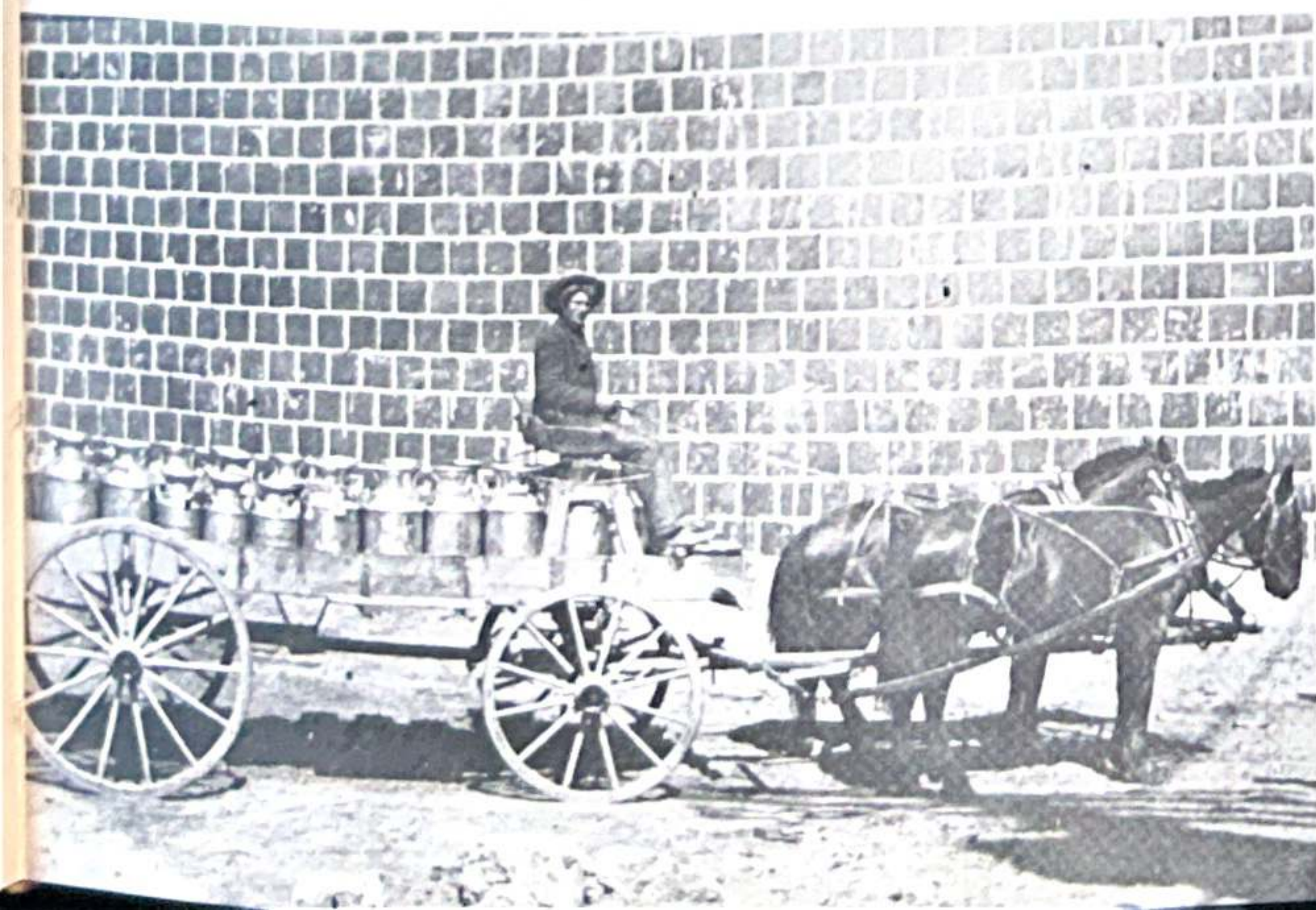


This little sternwheeler brought cans of milk daily from Oak Harbor to the Pacific Coast Condensed Milk Co. in Mount Vernon for about two years after the plant opened in 1907. Joe Fredericks was the captain.

*Picture from the Carnation Company, courtesy of R. K. Fort*

Jonas Hanson with a wagon load of milk in 10-gallon cans about 1910. The wall is that of the Pacific Coast Condensed Milk Company, later the Carnation Company. Note that Mount Vernon's streets were not yet paved.

*Picture from Margaret Summers*



Small milk wagon on Cleveland Avenue in Mount Vernon in 1910.

*Picture from Skagit County Historical Society*

The first truck to collect milk cans in Skagit County, put on the road by the Pacific Coast Condensed Milk Company about 1910. R. E. (Bob) Smiley is at the wheel.

*Picture from Bill Smiley*





Once more they organized a Skagit County Dairymen's Association, its officers and directors carefully selected to represent all parts of the county. In June, 1916, J. B. Hall became president, George Reay vice-president, Will Knutzen secretary, and James Hulbert treasurer; the directors were Peter Samuelson, Andrew Anderson, F. A. Jewell, Fred Berger, and Peter Omdal. The new organization tried to bargain with the condenser, asking \$2.50 a hundred for their milk.

The condenser did not agree to this. The events of the next two years gave a great impetus to the organization and brought it many new members and increased loyalty from the old. In October of 1916 the Mount Vernon Cream Company was purchased by some mysterious interest which shortly turned out to be the Carnation Company. Carnation had opened a plant in Stanwood in 1914 and bought one at Ferndale in 1916 and was planning to open one in Sedro Woolley in 1917, so many farmers felt they were in the grip of an octopus. It did not help their feelings about milk prices when the company gave all its employees a bonus of a month's wages in January, 1917. In May it claimed that it could not afford to meet the dairymen's price and quality demands when company officials met with Association officers.

A little competition was restored when a new condenser, the Federal Condensed Milk Company,

incorporated in April of 1917 and built just south of Mount Vernon on the river. However, Carnation shut down the "little condenser" in September of that year and in 1919, just two years after it had begun to operate, the Federal Company dropped 124 of its suppliers.

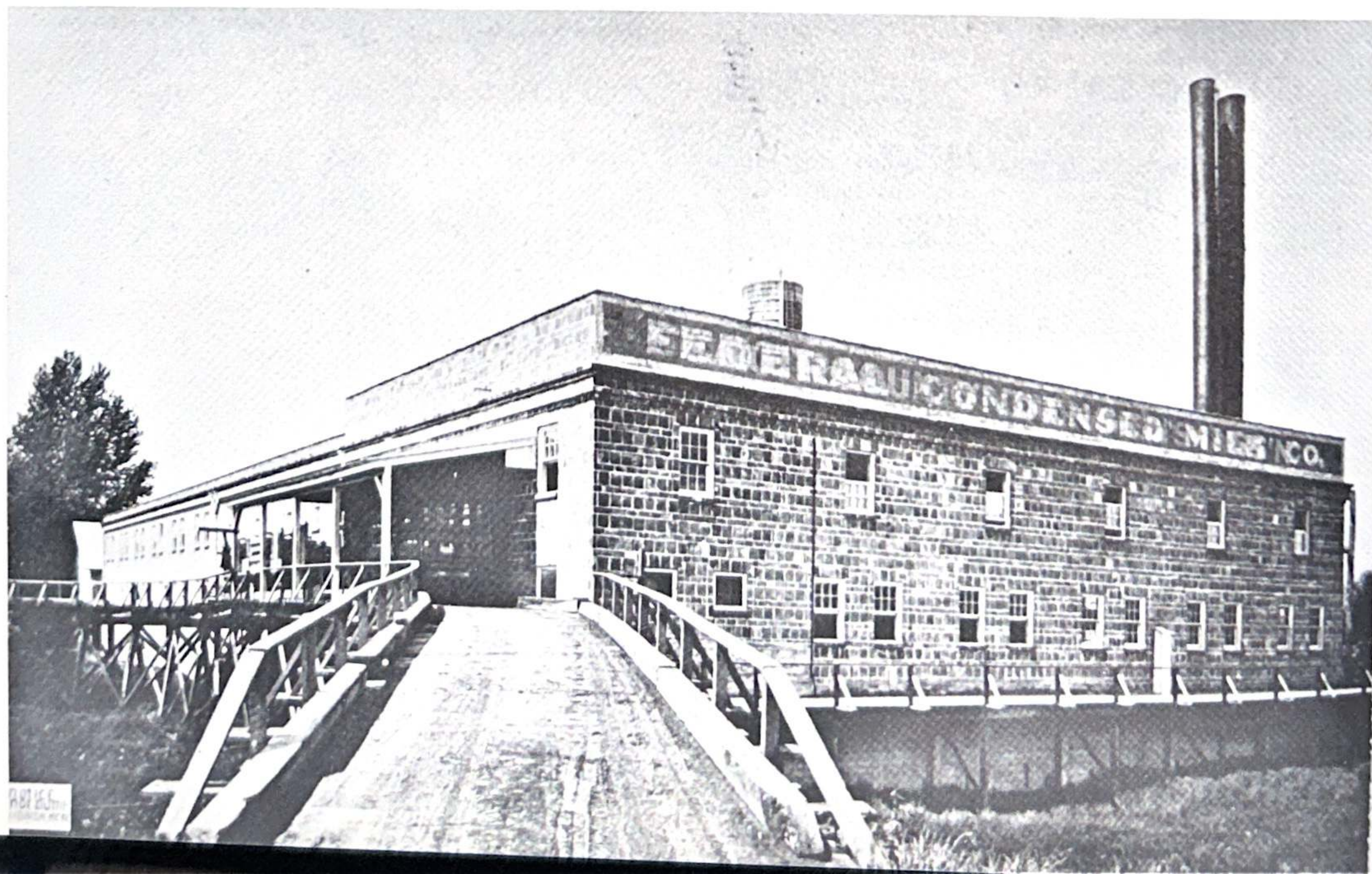
This time the organization was ready to do something in a critical situation. The Dairymen's Association bought the Burlington creamery to take the milk of the members dropped by Federal and began plans for its own plant to make butter, cheese, powdered milk, and ice cream mix. The new plant was built in Burlington in 1920 and in that year they took an option to buy the Federal plant in Mount Vernon. The cooperative still had periods of difficulty due to shortage of capital, some harassment from vested interests, and some unsympathetic community reactions, but farmers in general had recovered from their fears that cooperatives were socialistic. Cooperative buying of feed and fertilizer alleviated other farm problems. Darigold became a force in the valley, DHIA has continued its work, and the habit of cooperation for common purposes has established itself as part of the Skagit way of life.

The other battle of the dairy farmers was a legal one against oleomargarine and Hebe milk. In 1923 they elected W. J. Knutzen to the legislature. It was through his efforts and those of others concerned with dairy interests that the artificial forms

The Federal Condensed Milk Company built its plant on the Skagit River just south of Mount Vernon soon after the Carnation Company bought out the Mount Vernon

Cream Company. It continued in operation until it was bought by Darigold after 1917.

*Picture from Jess Knutzen*







The Skagit County Dairymen's Association plant at Burlington after the organization had affiliated with others to form Darigold in the early 1920s. The staff, l to r: 1, Lucille (Marston) Fisher; 2, Oasis Beatty; 3, Muriel (Moody) Calbom; 4, Henry Rohweder; 5, J. W. Harrison; 6, W. J. Knutzen; 7, Jess Humphrey; 8, Peter Omdal; 9, Alfred Johnson; 10, Silas Butler; 11, Ed Meyer; 12, Gottlieb von Allman; 13, Lawrence Price; 14, Dwight

Hansen; 15, George Rohweder; 16, Vic Beringer; 17, Wendell Calbom; 18, Emil Wendland; 19, Verlin Swanlund; 20, W. C. Baker; 21, Clarence (Bud) Egbert; 22, Soren Anderson; 23, Ted Samuelson; 24, Al Gilbank; 25, Elvers Hansen; 26, Lee Landon; 27, Cecil Seay; 28, Lewis Daniels; 29, John Rohweder; 30, Ed O'Brien; 31, Harry Calbom.  
Picture from Jess Knutzen

of milk and butter were banished from the state for many years.

Before 1900 a great many people in towns kept a cow and often allowed her to pasture along the edges of the streets. This constituted a hazard for people's gardens and polluted the streets with cow pies which could catch the unwary—or even the wary after dark. City councils were petitioned repeatedly by the non-owners to do away with the nuisance but it was not until around 1910 that loose-roaming cows were banned from the city streets. In the country where all the farms were fenced cows continued to pasture along the highways for many years until roads were paved and

the cows became a menace to automobiles.

Milk for townspeople who did not own cows was not handled to any extent through stores except as evaporated milk. Families often bought from a neighbor who kept a cow or cows. By 1900 dairies developed which delivered milk and cream to the door every day. At first the milk was measured from a can into the customer's own container, but glass milk bottles appeared in the early 1900s. Milk was not pasteurized yet nor homogenized; the cream began to rise in the bottle before delivery and the customer could skim his own or mix the milk and cream again, as he wished. Daily delivery early in the morning was important as not



Shares 1


Certificate No. 36

# Skagit County Dairymen's Association

(INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON)

This Certifies that Jonas M. Hansen is the  
One Shares of the capital stock of  
owner of \_\_\_\_\_  
Skagit County Dairymen's Association, transferrable only on the books of the Association, by the holder thereof,  
in person or by attorney, upon surrender of this certificate properly endorsed.

In Witness Whereof the said corporation has caused this certificate to be signed by its duly authorized  
officers and to be sealed with the seal of the corporation, at Burlington, Washington, this 18 day of  
Feb, A. D. 1917.



SEAL

J. B. Hall  
President

W. J. ...  
Secretary

A stock certificate of the cooperative which the dairymen organized in 1917 to meet the challenge when the Carnation Company reduced the price of milk and restricted

the amount which it would accept. The Skagit County Dairymen's Association later joined with other cooperatives to form Darigold.  
*Certificate from Margaret Summers*

every house had an ice box and electric refrigeration was only beginning around World War I. Milk delivery has lingered on though every market has had refrigerated cases for two generations.

In 1920 it was obvious that farming in Skagit County was changing but what the new patterns were to be was not clear. The end of World War I brought a collapse of agricultural prices which hit very hard. Although the Great Depression did not strike the national business community until the

stock market crash in the fall of 1929 the depression on the farms of the county started in 1920-21. In Skagit County the farmers met it by tightening their belts, improving their dairy herds and their agricultural methods, banding together in cooperatives, refinancing their mortgages under liberal Federal Land Bank terms, and keeping their faith in their rich land, their favorable climate, their own hard work, and the future.

Cupples Ranch, a homestead in the valley of the Baker River at the turn of the century. The original homestead house burned and was replaced by this one. The whole ranch was flooded by Lake Shannon. The Cupples' dairy delivered milk to homes in Concrete for many years.

*Picture from  
Angele Howe Cupples*





## Chapter VI

# OPPORTUNITY UNLIMITED

Settling a new country involved risks and hardships but in compensation it offered the hope of spectacular rewards for those who could recognize and seize the opportunities presented by an unfamiliar situation. Practically all the pioneers had come with the intention of building a better life for themselves and their children, each with his private vision of the possibilities. Glorious dreams frequently vanished in the hard light of reality — the vast expectations of the railway boom on Fidalgo Island and elsewhere are the classic examples — while modest beginnings sometimes brought modest rewards and sometimes even wealth.

Many had dreamed of owning their own land and farming for their own profit. Through pre-emption claims, homesteads, and the purchase of logged-off lands from timber companies they obtained title to land; by unremitting hard labor they cleared the stump land, drained the marshes, diked out the salt tides and the river floods, and learned by trial and error which crops were profitable. Unimproved land which had been worth not more than \$10 an acre in 1890 had become rich farm land by 1920, selling for as much as \$500

an acre. Stump farmers who had come as penniless laborers found themselves modestly well off.

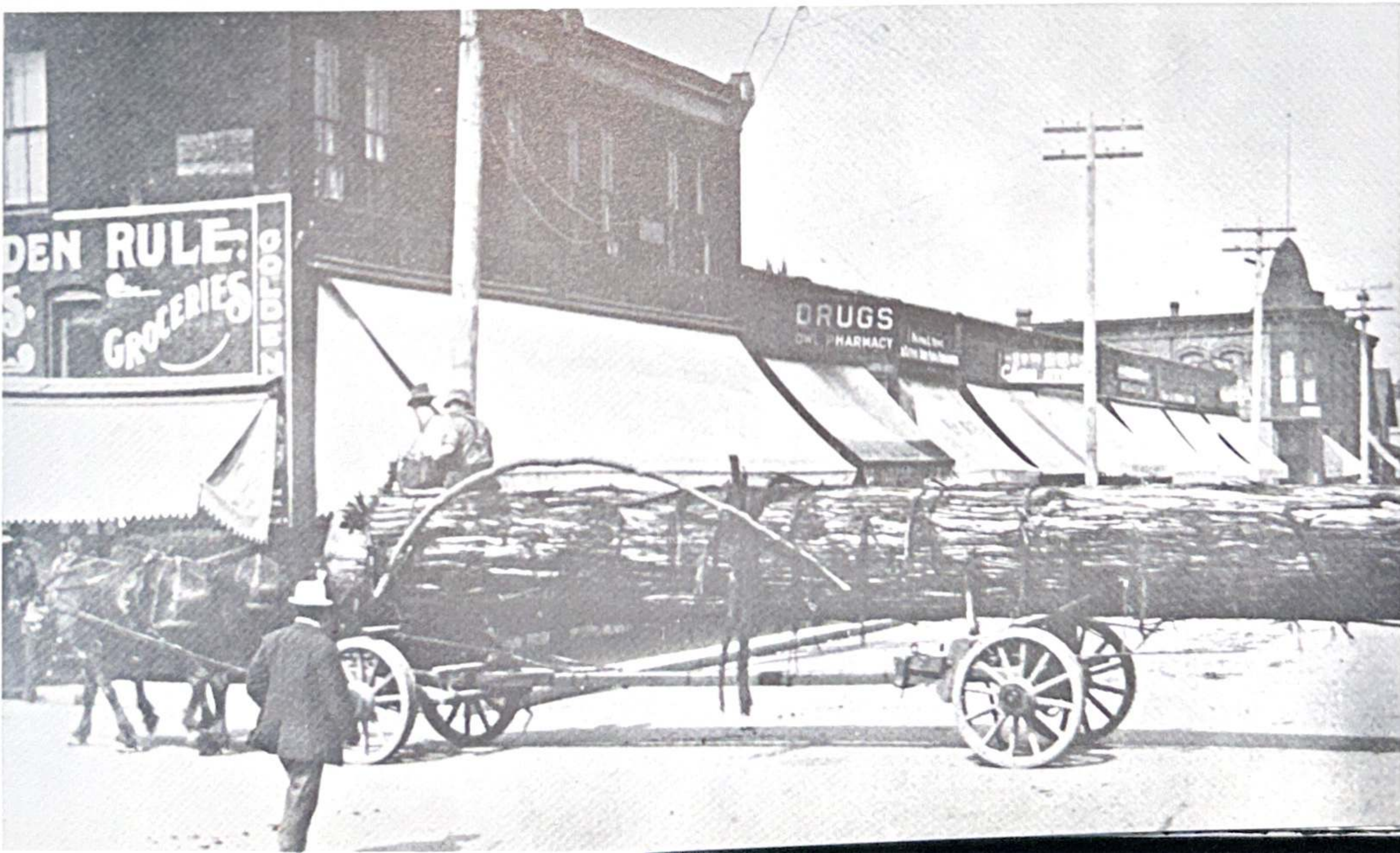
The trees which would-be farmers had regarded as enemies to be slashed and burned were seen as a valuable resource by those with experience in harvesting timber. The sheer size of many of the trees challenged all the skills, strength, and ingenuity which the loggers could muster. It was extremely difficult to saw through a trunk ten feet in diameter; some even exceeded that size. Men used spring boards as a working platform eight to ten feet above the ground in order to cut above the taper of the tree. Getting these huge logs to the mill posed many problems and there were difficulties in handling them in the mill. Sometimes the mill crew would have to be sent home while the deck and carriage crew, using razor sharp axes, hand chopped a swell-butted log 12 or 13 feet in diameter until it was small enough to go between the headsaw guides. Another way of reducing them to manageable size was by boring holes in them with a hand auger, loading the holes with black powder, and blasting the log in two.

Everyone — settlers, loggers, millmen — mar-

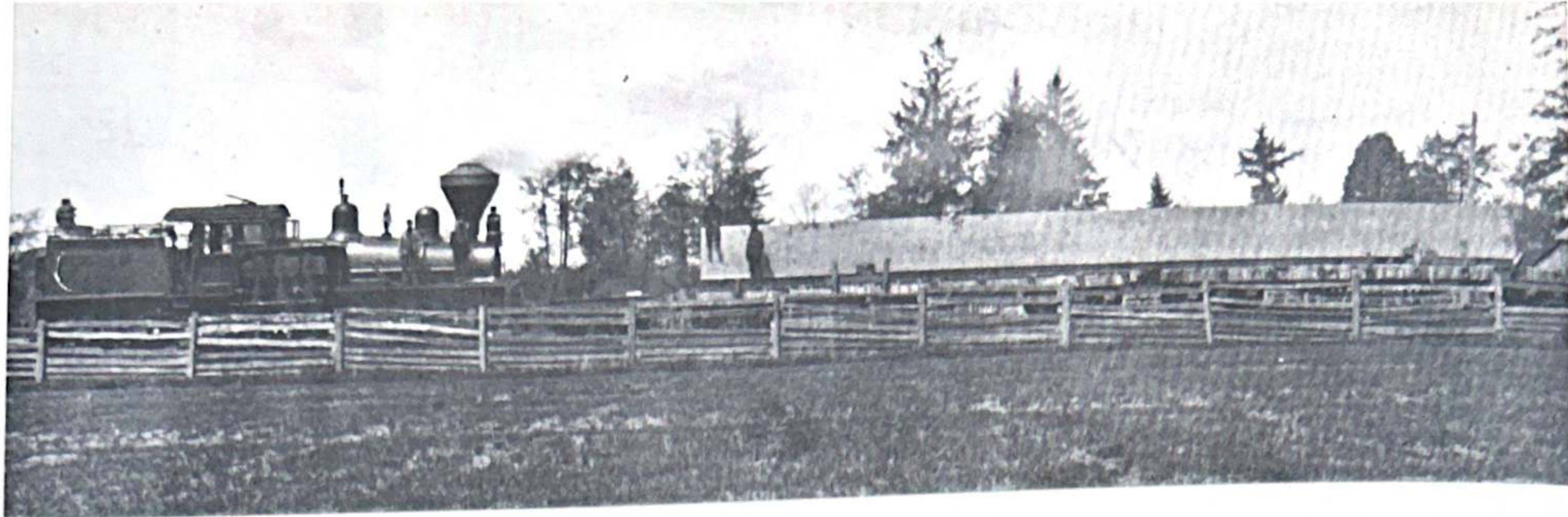
Log on horse-drawn wagon on Gates Street crossing First Street in Mount Vernon in 1915 when logs were being

lowered down Lincoln Hill and hauled to the river. Ernest Rothrock is driving the wagon.

*Picture from Ralph Rothrock*







The English Lumber Company sent this timber for exhibit at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909. It was 4-1/2 feet on a side and 74 feet long and required

two specially arranged flat cars to transport it—negotiating railway curves was the problem. The locomotive is a Shay. *Picture from Bill Mason*

veled at the size of the trees and was eager to show them off. Pictures of large groups of people seated or dancing on a huge stump are common. A few people made their first homes out of hollow cedar stumps. A section of log was sent to the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893, another 12 feet in diameter went to Buffalo in 1901, and a tremendous timber went to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904. It was 100 feet long, and required three flat cars to transport it; the timber was mounted on the central car and the ends pivoted on the others to permit negotiating the curves en route. It was accompanied by two

cubes of solid wood 4 1/2 feet on a side, painted as dice. A similar timber 74 feet long went from Skagit County to the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909. In the Forestry Building at the A.Y.P. there was a section of a 16-foot log and the entrance to the Skagit County booth was a doorway cut through a tree which had been a sapling when Christ was born. Skagit County logs were used to construct the most palatial log cabin ever built, the lodge at Glacier National Park.

Logging was a trade for specialists who knew the tricks, the tools, and the dangers. A few people made fortunes; a great many young men worked

The Skagit County booth in the State of Washington Building at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909. The exhibit featured oats and lumber, but also showed the variety of the agricultural, mineral, fish, and other resources of the county. Across the left front it reads, "Ten thousand new farms for 10,000 new farmers."

The banners show that the exhibit won a Grand Prize for Oats and a Gold Medal for General Agricultural Exhibits. The cross section of log which forms the entrance had growth rings showing it to be about 2000 years old. H. L. Willis of Mount Vernon was in charge of the exhibit. *Picture from Virginia Willis Russell*





Crew at Rockport about to drive shingle bolts downstream to the mill. The long pikes were used to pry them free when they caught on rocks or shoals.

*Picture from Tom Benton*



in the woods and accumulated the money with which to buy land and start farming.

Getting out shingle bolts was hard heavy work which many settlers learned to do. The cedar tree which splits so readily and resists decay so long furnished the material for most of the early cabins. Shingle bolts could be cut either from the stumps left by the loggers or from one's own cedar trees, and selling them to shingle mills was an appealing source of extra income. The bolts could be hauled to the mill on sledges or wagons or floated down specially constructed flumes or driven down creeks or rivers in the spring when melting snows raised the water level. However, more than one man who had worked all winter piling up bolts next to the stream saw them washed away by a spring freshet; pioneers learned to accept the blows of fate.

More profits were made when logging and

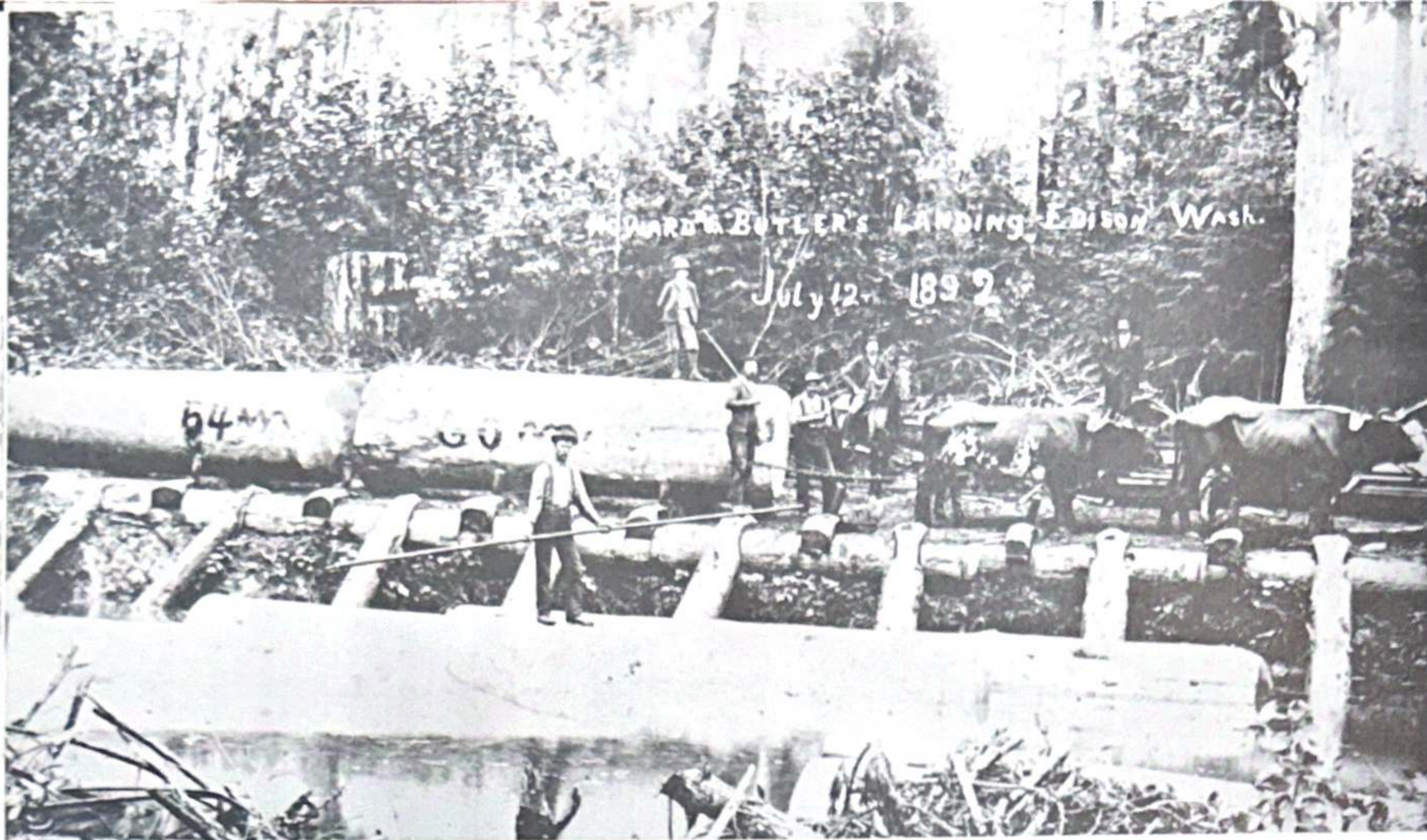
milling were combined. The early need for building materials encouraged the erection of sawmills and shingle mills in each locality along the river, the sloughs, and the salt water harbors. A mill was relatively easy to set up; it could be operated until the local timber was exhausted and then moved to another location or abandoned. Fires in lumber and shingle mills were common because everything but the machinery was inflammable. Even profitable mills burned but it was common observation that mill fires became unusually frequent when the market for lumber and shingles was poor. The nationwide depression which began in 1893 and lasted for three or four years temporarily took all the profits out of logging and milling. When the market improved toward the end of the decade because of the Alaska gold rush and the Spanish-American War, the era of the big mills was about to begin.

Shingle bolts on a sled with 27-foot runners being dragged over a skid road in 1911. Sled was made by D. J. Healy. There were 84 bolts on the load. People on load, 1 to r: 4, Roy Bever; 5, Joe Healy; 6, Essie Jordan; 7, Jennie Healy; 8, Dan Healy; 15, Fred Scott.

*Picture from Violet Healy*







Turn of logs, all from the same tree, hauled by oxen over a skid road from the woods to the log dump in 1892.

*Picture from Frank Howard*

The cook shack, cook, and crew of a logging camp on Guemes Island in the 1890s. The screened box over the heads of the two men at the left was their substitute for a refrigerator. *Picture from Wallie Funk*



A. S. Howard's shingle mill near Bow, one of the first to turn out sawed shingles in Washington Territory from 1885 to 1887. Men in the picture are not identified.

*Picture from Frank Howard*



Walker Valley shingle mill about 1895. Hugh Walker with his arm on the saw. Women and children, l to r: Alice and Hester Lagault (grandchildren of Hugh Walker), Ellen Walker, Lizza Lagault (daughter of Hugh Walker), Retta Walker, men unidentified.

*Picture from Effie Calkins*



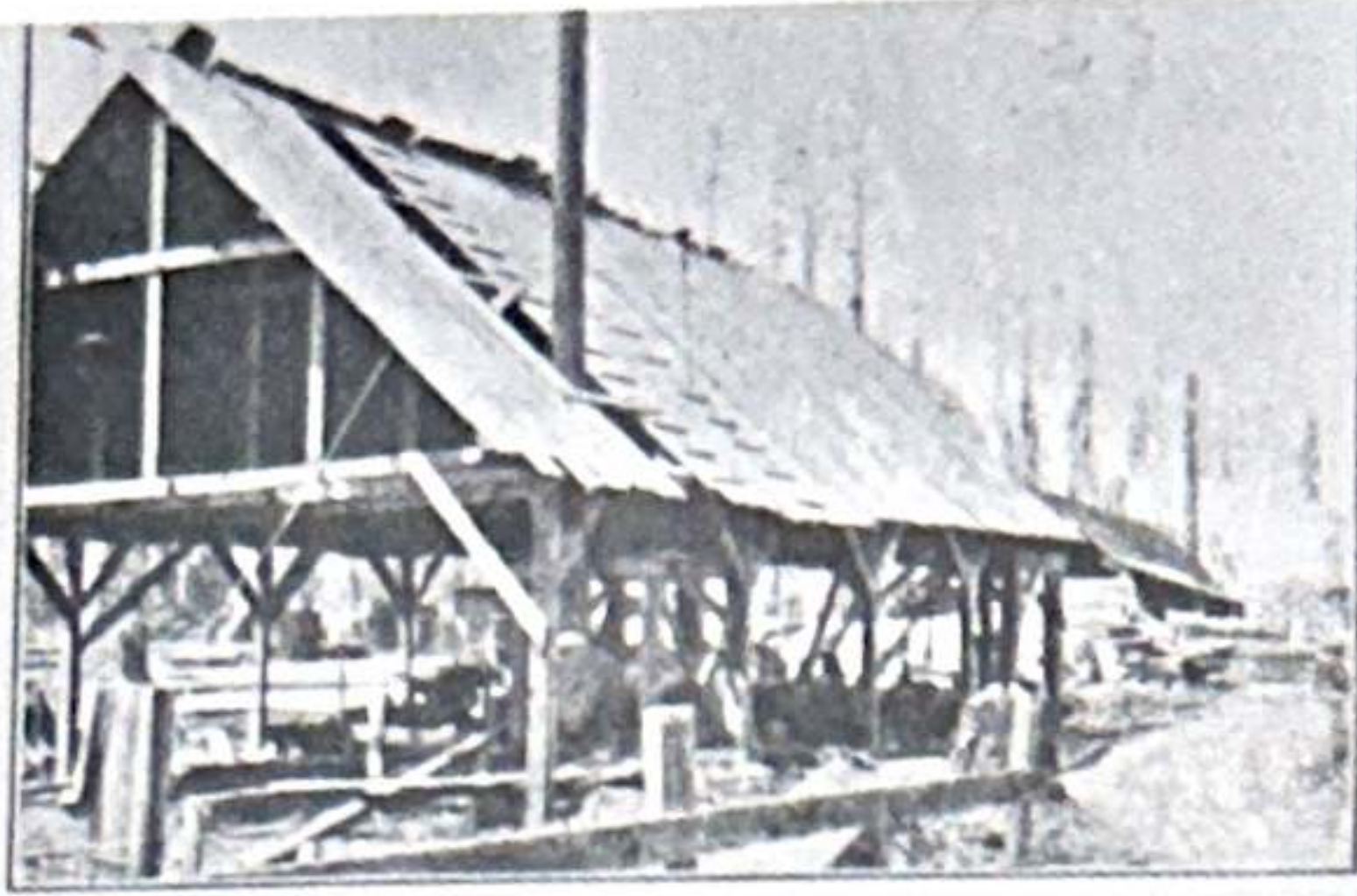
Siwash Shingle Mill in Mount Vernon about 1907. It stood near where the Lion's park is today. In the background is the original bridge over the Skagit. Note the water barrels on the ridge of the roof for fire protection. The kiln for drying the shingles is at the left.

*From the collection of the Skagit County Historical Museum, gift of Agnes Downs Horn*

The shingle mill of Jack Reed and Ed Freeman in Mount Vernon in 1898. It stood beside the river just south of town. At least some of the shingle bolts came by wagon but all the finished shingles were shipped on the river boats which loaded them at the mill to start them on their trip to eastern markets. Picture in collection of Skagit County Historical Museum, gift of John Wylie







JACOBS & HARTS' SAW MILL.

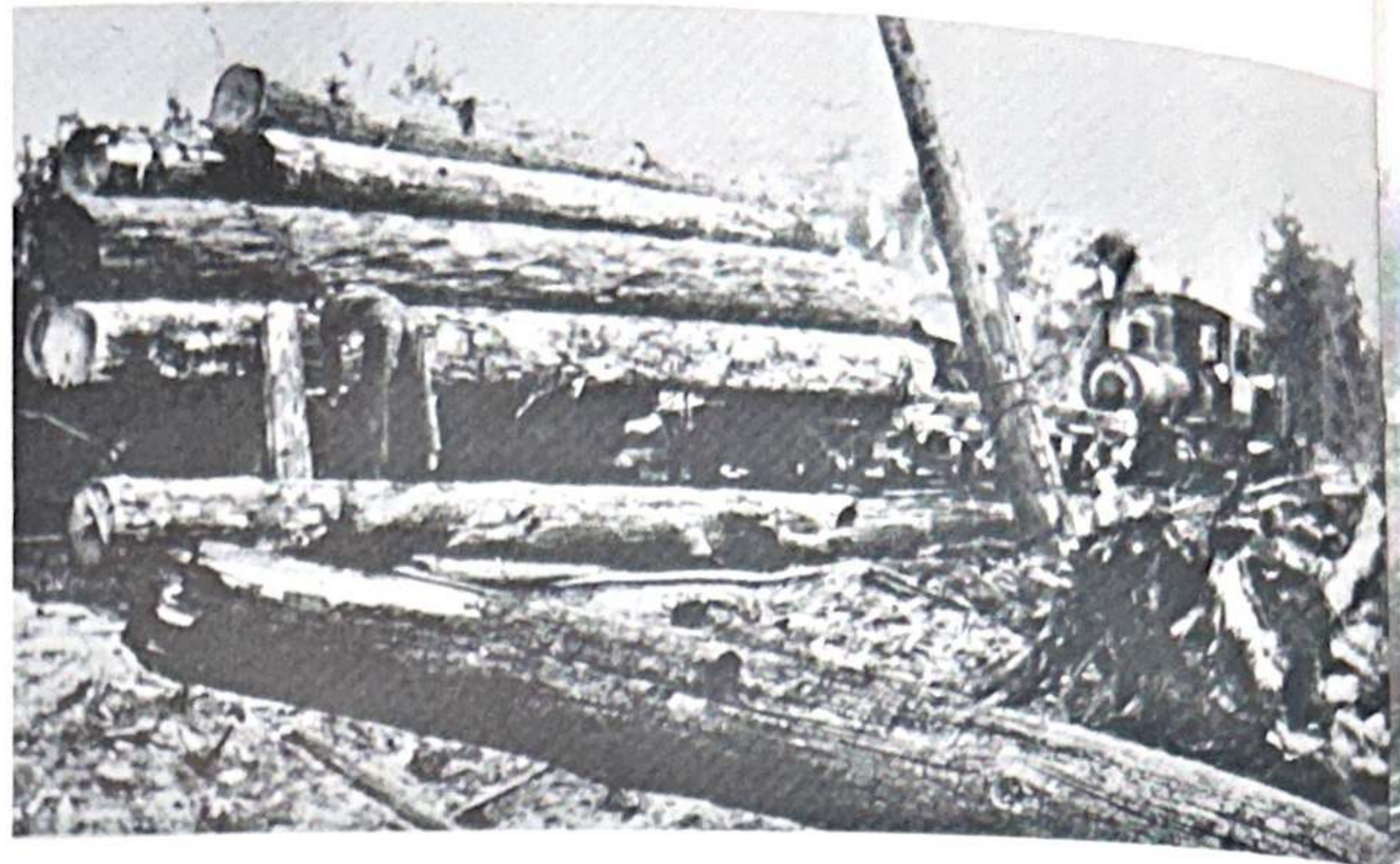
This industry is located two miles due west of Burlington. The mill has a capacity of 15,000 feet of lumber per day, both fir and cedar being cut. Arrangements are now being perfected to add a planing mill to the saw mill, which will get away with 10,000 feet of lumber each day. A shingle mill with a capacity of 50,000 each ten hours, and a lath machine of modern make will also be run in connection with the saw mill some time during the coming summer. The members of this firm are both experts at the business they are now engaged in, and this mill is kept busy six days each week filling orders for both local and foreign trade.

*Reproduced for the Ronald Holtum collection from Sebring's SKAGIT COUNTY ILLUSTRATED, 1903*

The timber which could be easily rolled into the water was almost exhausted by 1900. Logging railroads were stabbing back into the heavy stands in the valleys and the foothills, where steam donkey engines yarded and loaded the logs on cars and steam locomotives, specially built for work in the woods, hauled the trains to log dumps on lakes or rivers. There were still many small mills for local production but the mills which fed lumber, shingles, boxes, and other wood products into commercial channels were large ones located where rails and water met. One such area was along the chain of lakes at the foot of the Cascades where the tracks of the Northern Pacific ran beside Lake McMurray, Big Lake, and Clear Lake.

Lake McMurray was the site of the McMurray Cedar Lumber Company in 1890 even before the railroad arrived. Both the mill and the town suffered severely in the hard times which followed 1893. In 1896 the Atlas Lumber and Mill Company bought out the original firm. It expanded rapidly in the following years, obtaining its logs from the area north, east, and south of the lake. The English concern had its big headquarters camp number 1 not far to the west.

Between McMurray and Big Lake the settlement of Ehrlich grew up around a shingle mill. Midway of Big Lake was the mill at Montborne. At the north end of the lake was the tremendous complex of the Day Lumber Company with its company town, store, farm, hospital, and logging railroads extending back into the woods. The



Last timber on Lincoln Hill in Mount Vernon was logged in 1915 by Slosson Logging Company, using this little locomotive and a few miles of track to bring logs to top of hill where they were loaded on wagons. Since wagon brakes proved inadequate for the loads, they were lowered on cables down the hill and drawn by horses through town to the river.

*Picture from Ralph Rothrock*

company built streets of cottages and advertised for men with families in order to develop a stable labor force. Big Lake was a self-contained community. Over the weekends the men could go to church with their families in the community hall, could patronize the barber shop, could hunt or fish or devise their own amusements, or could go to the saloon. If they wanted action and excitement Sedro Woolley was accessible by rail; Mount Vernon was much more difficult to reach though there was a road of sorts.

Farther along the valley was the huge mill of the Clear Lake Lumber Company. The farming community was older than the mill so Clear Lake had a life of its own apart from lumber and shingles but the size of the mill and its operations overshadowed everything else. The company owned huge stands of timber east of the town along Day Creek and Finney Creek. It built houses for the logging camps which could be moved to new sites on flat cars as the timber in one area was exhausted. In 1920 the management claimed that they could continue to operate into the indefinite future on the timber from their own lands since the second growth would be ready for harvest before the virgin stands were gone.

There were mills at Sauk, Rockport, Concrete, Hamilton, and Birdsvew. Walker Valley had a mill. Blanchard, Bay View, Avon, North Avon, and Mount Vernon all sawed either lumber or shingles. The Butler Lumber Mill logged and milled near Sedro Woolley; the Moody brothers





Skagit Mill Company at Lyman about 1920. This is a Darius Kinsey picture.

*Picture from Violet Healy*

operated a large concern, the Belfast Manufacturing Company at Belfast. Alger was a center for the extensive logging operations of Bloedel-Donovan though most of the milling was done in Whatcom County. Burlington had shingle mills and LaConner a lumber mill. One of the giants of the industry was the English Logging Company which had its headquarters camp near Milltown. Many others could be named.

The milling center which topped them all was Anacortes. No single mill was larger than those at Big Lake and Clear Lake but there were many that were very large and great numbers of smaller ones. The mills and their booms of logs took up the whole waterfront from Weaverling Spit to Cap Sante and around on Guemes Channel at the foot of Cap Sante. The steam whistles of the lumber mills marked time in Anacortes beginning at 5:00 in the morning, each mill whistle having a distinct message for the men who worked there.

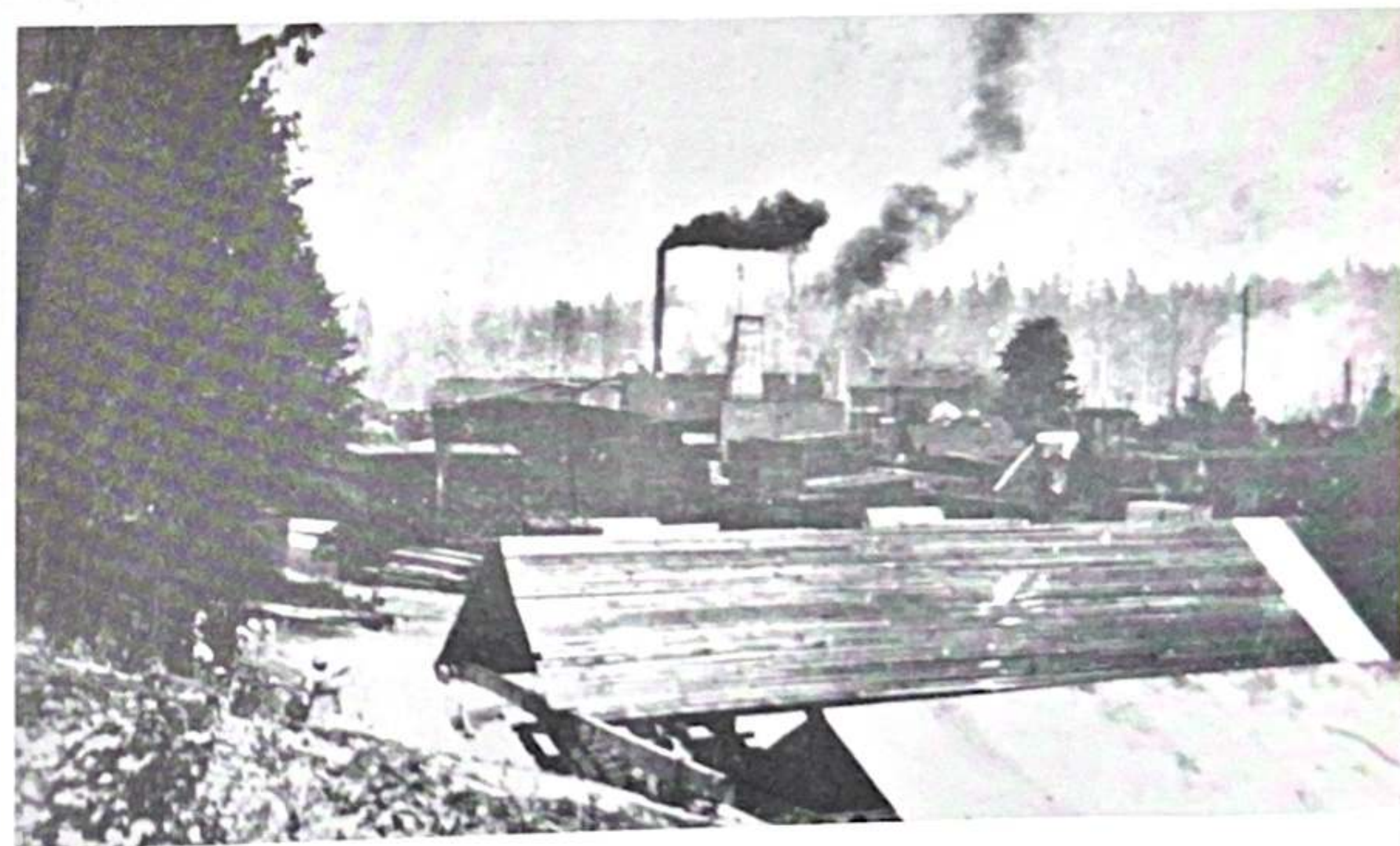
During World War I Anacortes became a shipbuilding center when the Sloan Shipyards located on Guemes Island and began turning out

The Day Lumber Company maintained a ranch at Big Lake. The horses which worked in the woods were looked after there. The dairy furnished milk for the company store and the ranch also supplied meat which was sold at the store.

*Picture from Josephine Barringer Hoffman*

The first lumber mill at Big Lake built by Shrewsbury and McLean in 1898 and sold in 1899 to Parker Brothers. Later in 1899 the big mill was added to this by M. J. Splain and A. E. Hendrickson.

*Picture given to Josephine Barringer Hoffman by Mrs. Poust*



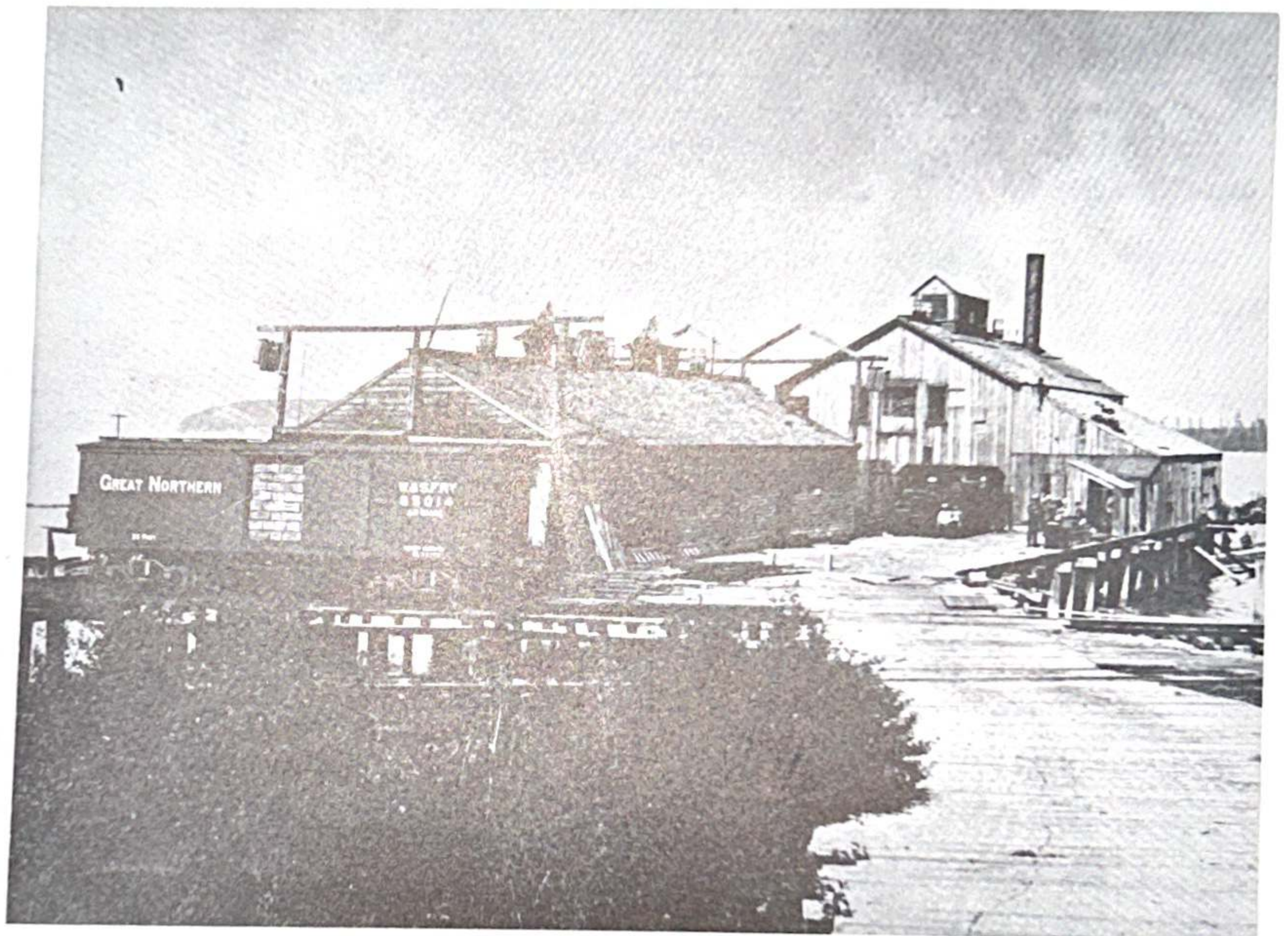




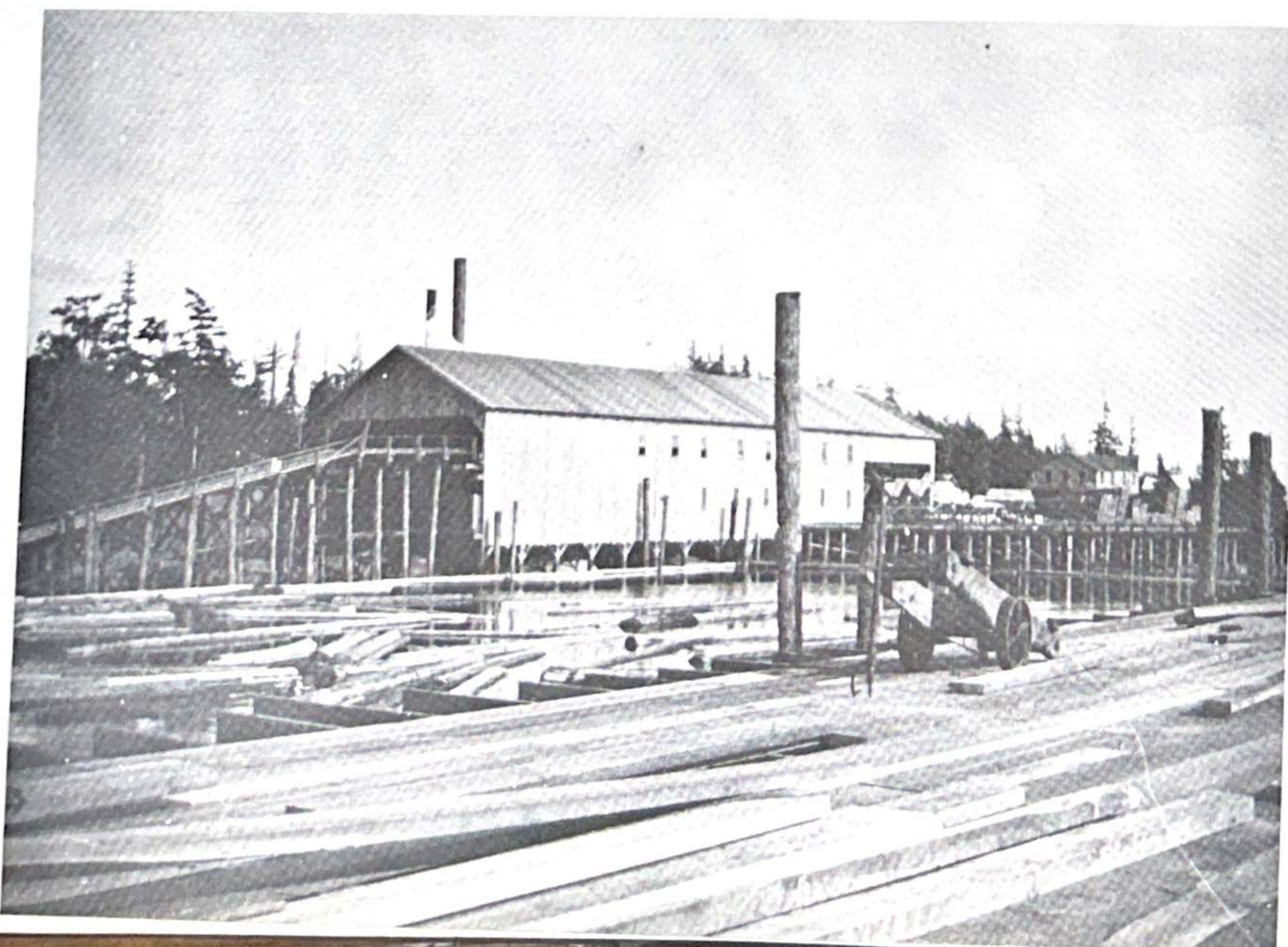
Butler Lumber Company mill at Belleville about 1910. The pond is at the right and the incline up which logs were hauled into the mill shows just above the shed roof. There is a plank road in the immediate foreground, a railroad just behind it, and stacked lumber at the upper left. In the left beyond the tracks are the slabs of waste wood which could be used as fuel or burned simply as waste.  
Picture from Fred Butler

The Fidalgo Mill in 1895, one of the early shingle mills on the east shore of Fidalgo Island at Anacortes. Later this became the Anacortes Lumber and Box Company, a very large enterprise.

From the collection of Wallie Funk



Alpha Urrut  
Bruce Leonard  
was  
drawn to  
log pond



The Great Northern Mill near the site of the pioneer mill of the 1880s on Guemes Channel east of what is now Commercial. It was owned by Lester David. It later became the old A L & B Mill, owned by Parchman, Storm and Ronneberger in 1903.

From the collection of Wallie Funk

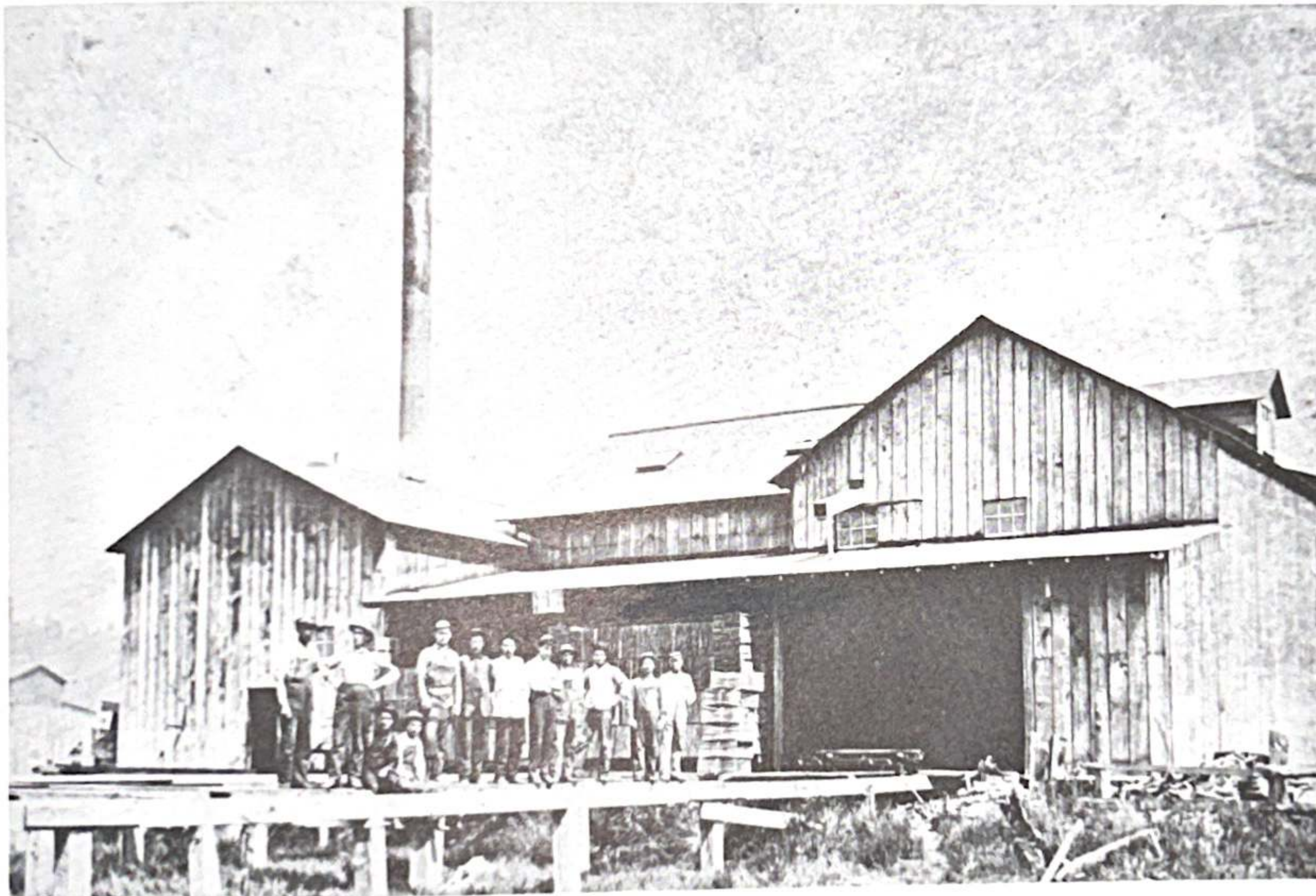
R in 1906  
X



The Eureka Mill Company operated a shingle mill in Anacortes between 1906 and 1912. Co-owners were Herbert A. Bockman and Charles N. Hawley who moved there from Ballard. In the picture, l to r, front row: 1, Ed Knapp, filer; 2, unidentified; 3, Elmer Storme; 4, Felix Hawley (son of Charles); 5, Henry McFadden; 6, Bill Sampleys; 7, Will Hagedorn; 8, Herbert A. Bockman. Back row: 1, Fred Hawley (son of Charles); 2, unidentified; 3, Frank Verral; 4, unidentified; 5, Charles Hawley; 6, Charles Dibble; 7, unidentified; 8, unidentified; 9, Smiley. Picture from Kathryn A. Thomas (a Darius Kinsey picture)

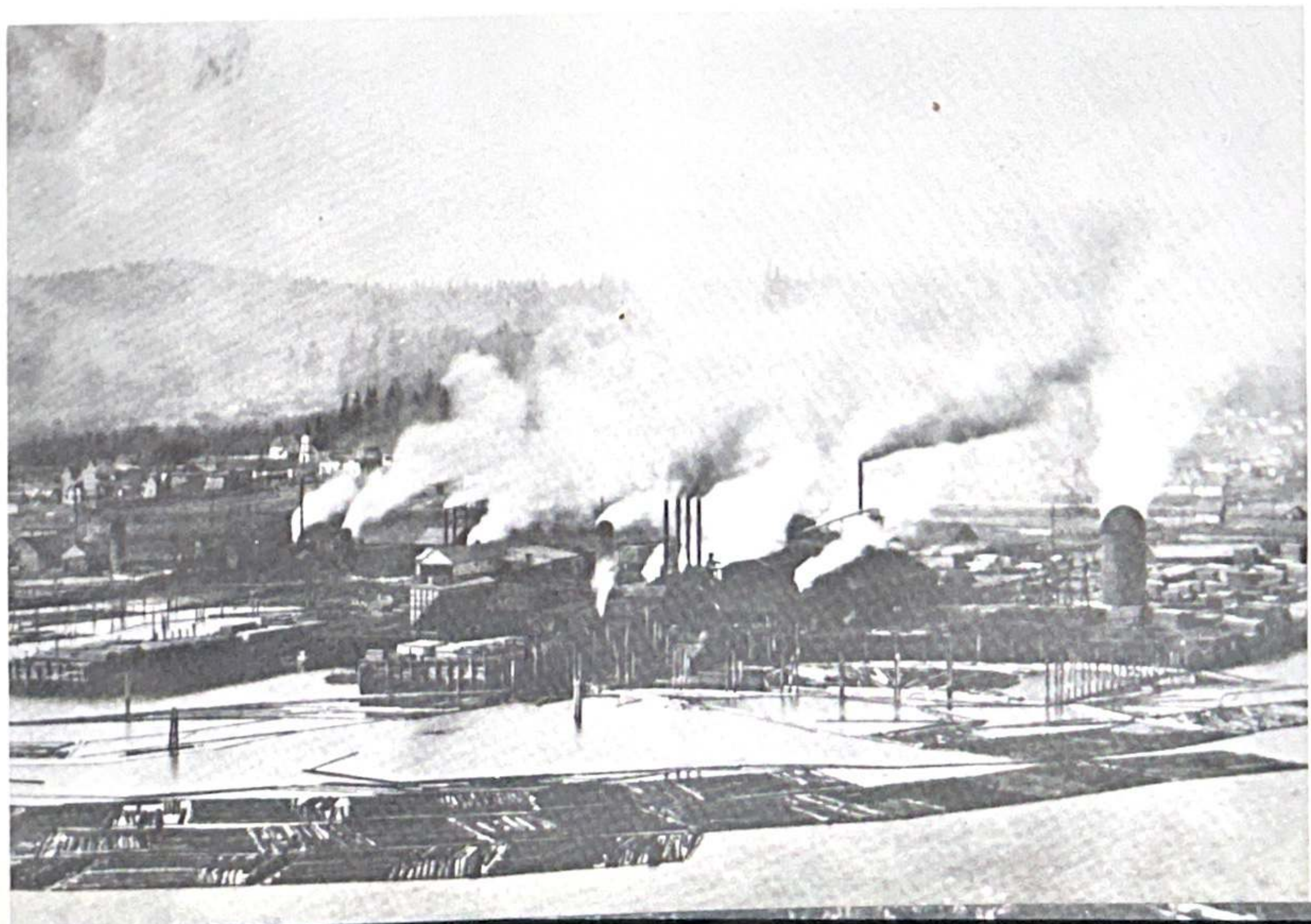


Herbert Bockman

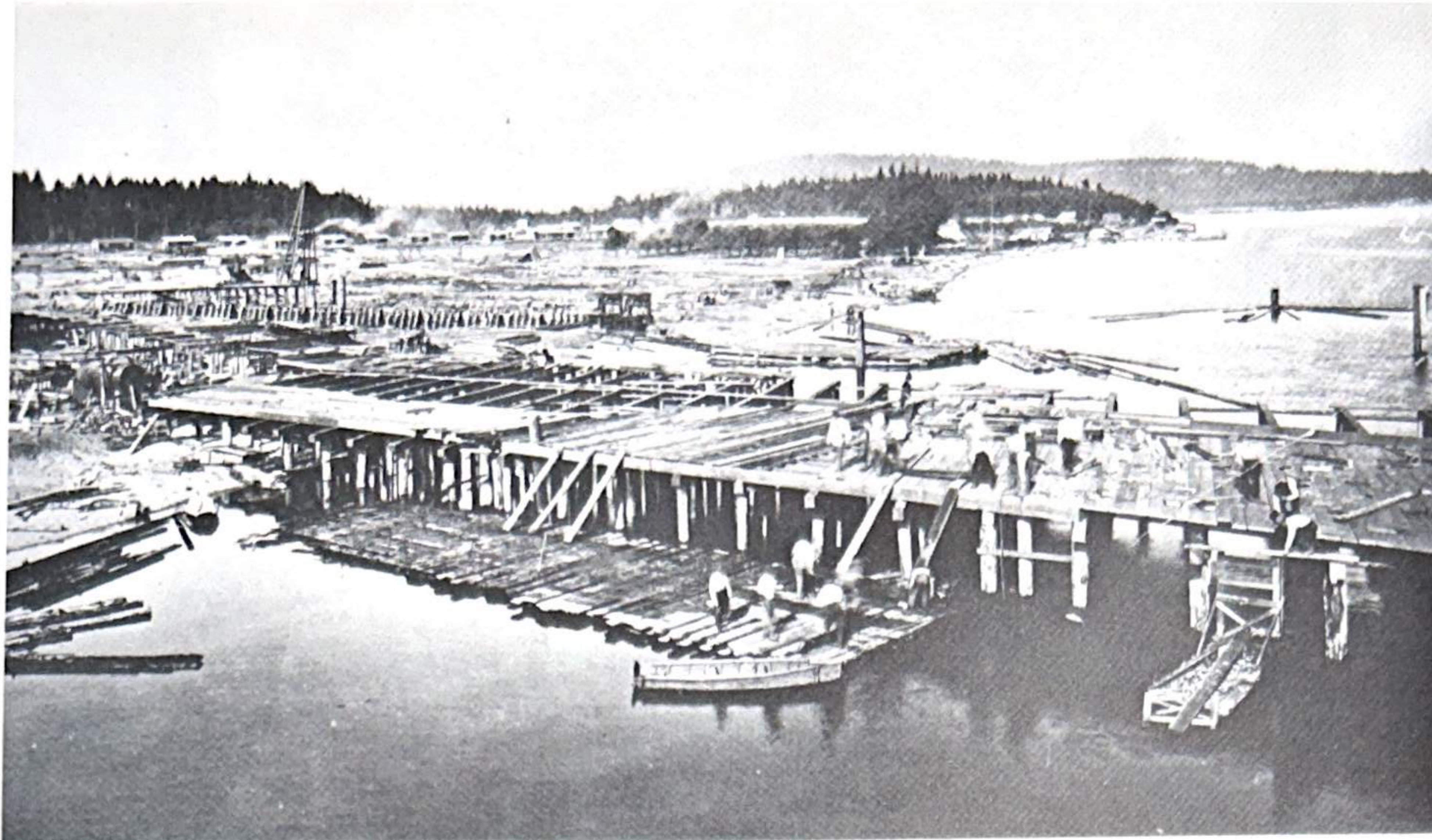


Burpee Shingle Mill in Anacortes in 1908. Charles Fisher is at far left. Also in picture, though not necessarily in this order: Charles Burpee, Frank Stevens, J. Martin, Mr. McDaniel, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Keebley, Frank Giesler, Mr. McKean, John Good. Picture from Mrs. Stanley Anderson

Looking at Anacortes from Cap Sante when the whole eastern shore was lined with shingle mills, lumber mills and box factories and the water was full of log booms. From the collection of Wallie Funk

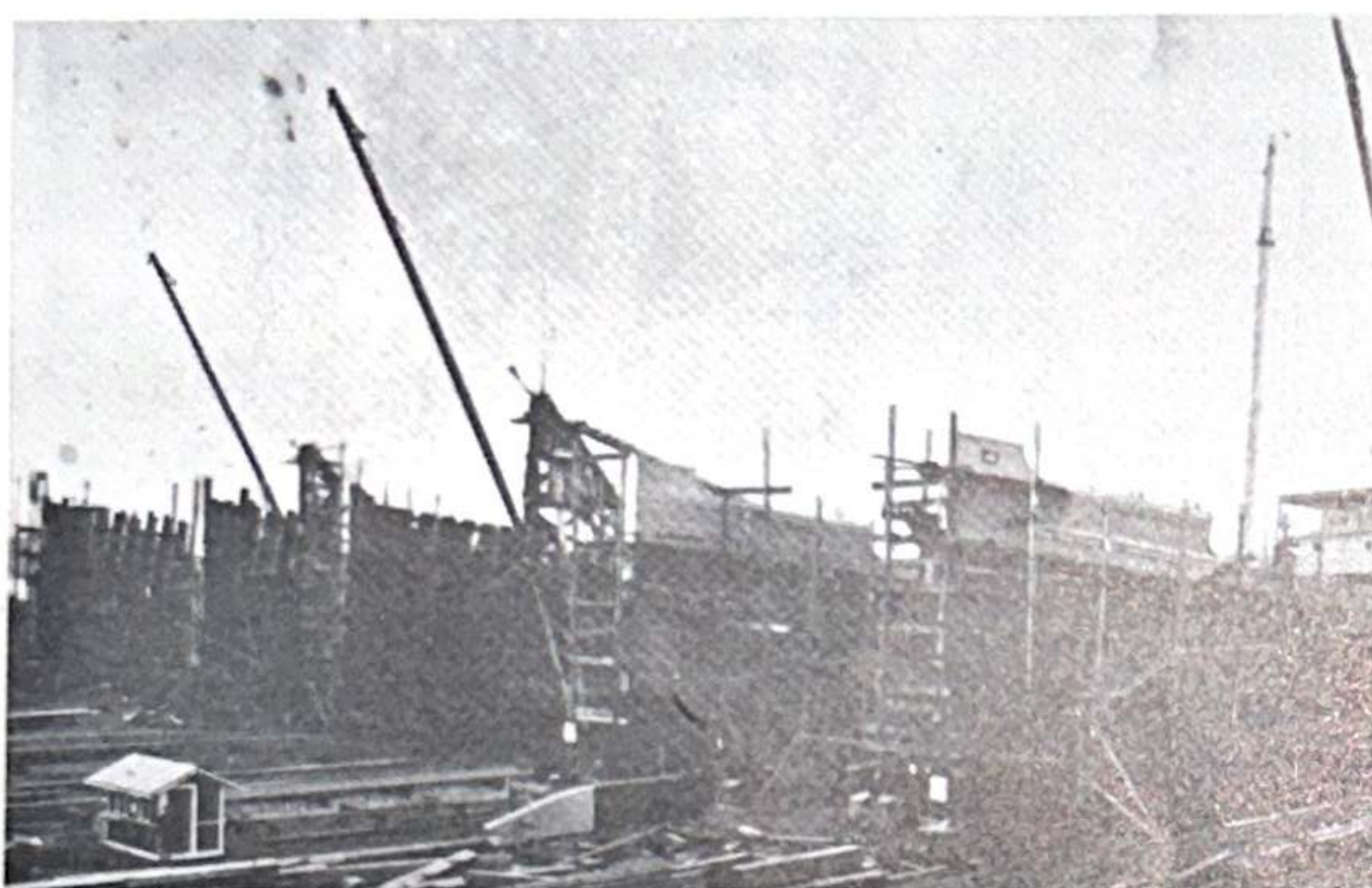






Sloan Shipyard at Anacortes in 1917. Many cargo ships were built here during World War I.

*Picture from Wallie Funk*



Sloan Shipyards on Guemes Island in 1919.  
*From: Anacortes Museum of History and Art*



Fishing near the mouth of the Skagit River around 1920.  
*Picture from LaVerne McNiel Bretvick*

City of La Conner and salmon fishing in early 1890s. The men are unloading their salmon into the scow which will take them to the La Conner cannery. The rear ends

of the small boats indicate that they have been using nets, probably purse seines.

*Picture from Lou Carlson*





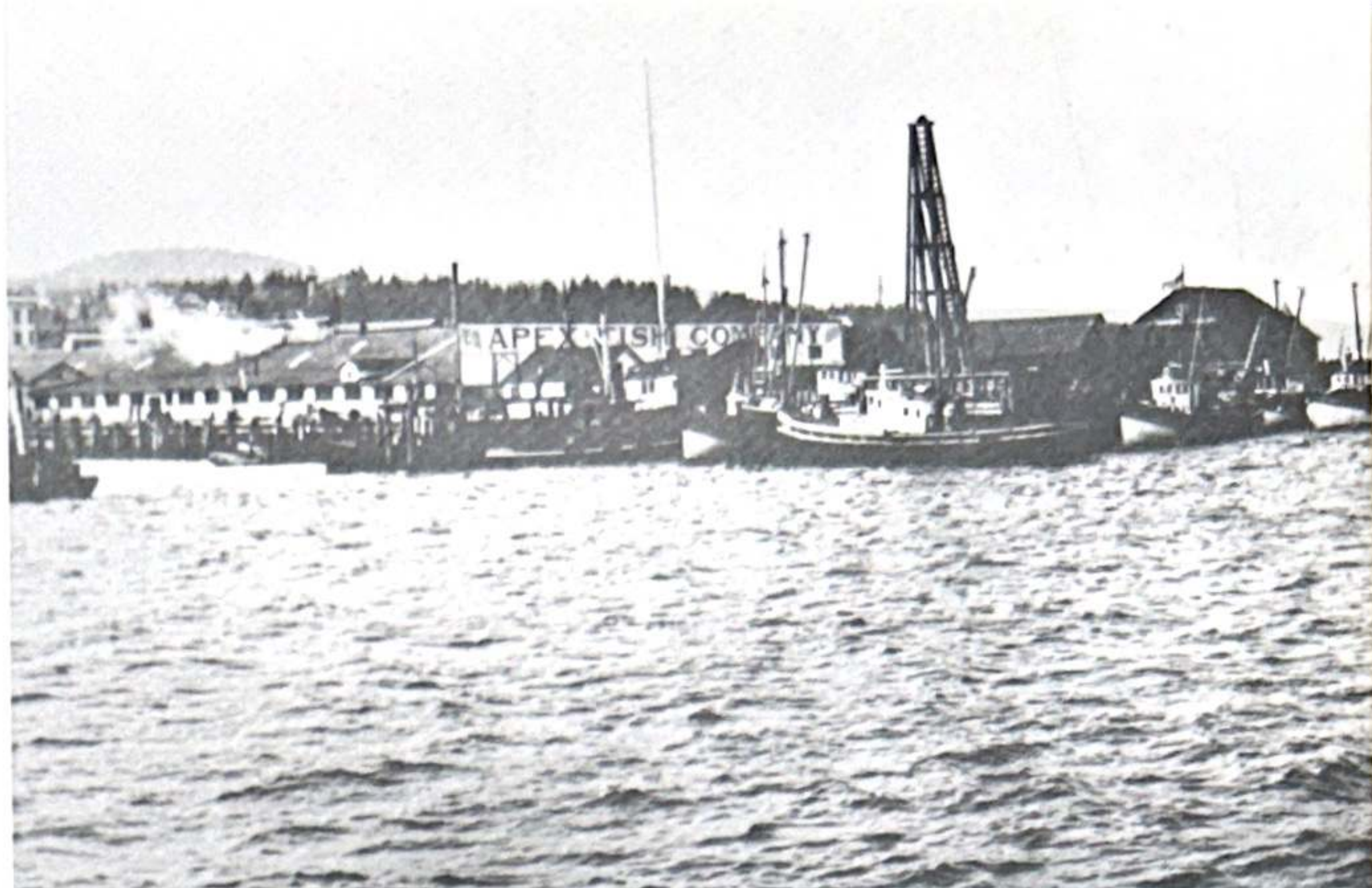
wooden freighters to replace those lost to German submarines.

Skagit County's riches in land and logs were matched by the bounty of its fishing. Before the white man's overfishing depleted the runs, different varieties of salmon were returning to their spawning grounds by the millions every summer, one type following another from May to October. Canneries lined Guemes Channel from downtown Anacortes to Ship's Harbor where the Victoria ferry now docks. Fishermen brought in their catch from their gill nets, their purse seines, and from the fish traps, usually company owned, which clustered around the mouths of the streams where the salmon converged in their attempt to reach their spawning beds. Sometimes the catch was so heavy that the canneries paid only five cents for a fish or even refused to take them so that fishermen had to dump them overboard as a feast for the gulls and crabs.

Codfish were brought to Anacortes from Bering Sea, packed in salt in the holds of the schooners, to be unloaded, dried, and packed at the Matheson or Robinson plant. Samish Bay grew oysters for the market and clams were dug on many local beaches. A fertilizer plant and glue factory on Guemes Channel used the trash fish and waste from the salmon packing, a plant which advertised its presence on each passing breeze.

In an attempt to maintain the salmon runs the State of Washington established fish hatcheries which were later taken over by the United States. They have doubtless been of help but wasteful fishing has depleted the salmon runs over the years to a fraction of their former size.

Fish cannery at 6th and I Streets in Anacortes about 1920. Canned salmon went to markets all over the world from the Anacortes canneries which lined Guemes Channel. The fresh fish were caught in nearby waters, brought



Anacortes—the Apex Fish Company, one of the salmon canneries along Guemes Channel. There were many others, some considerably larger than this.

*From: Anacortes Museum of History and Art*

Employees of the Anacortes Packing Company, a fish cannery. None are identified.

*From: Anacortes Museum of History and Art*

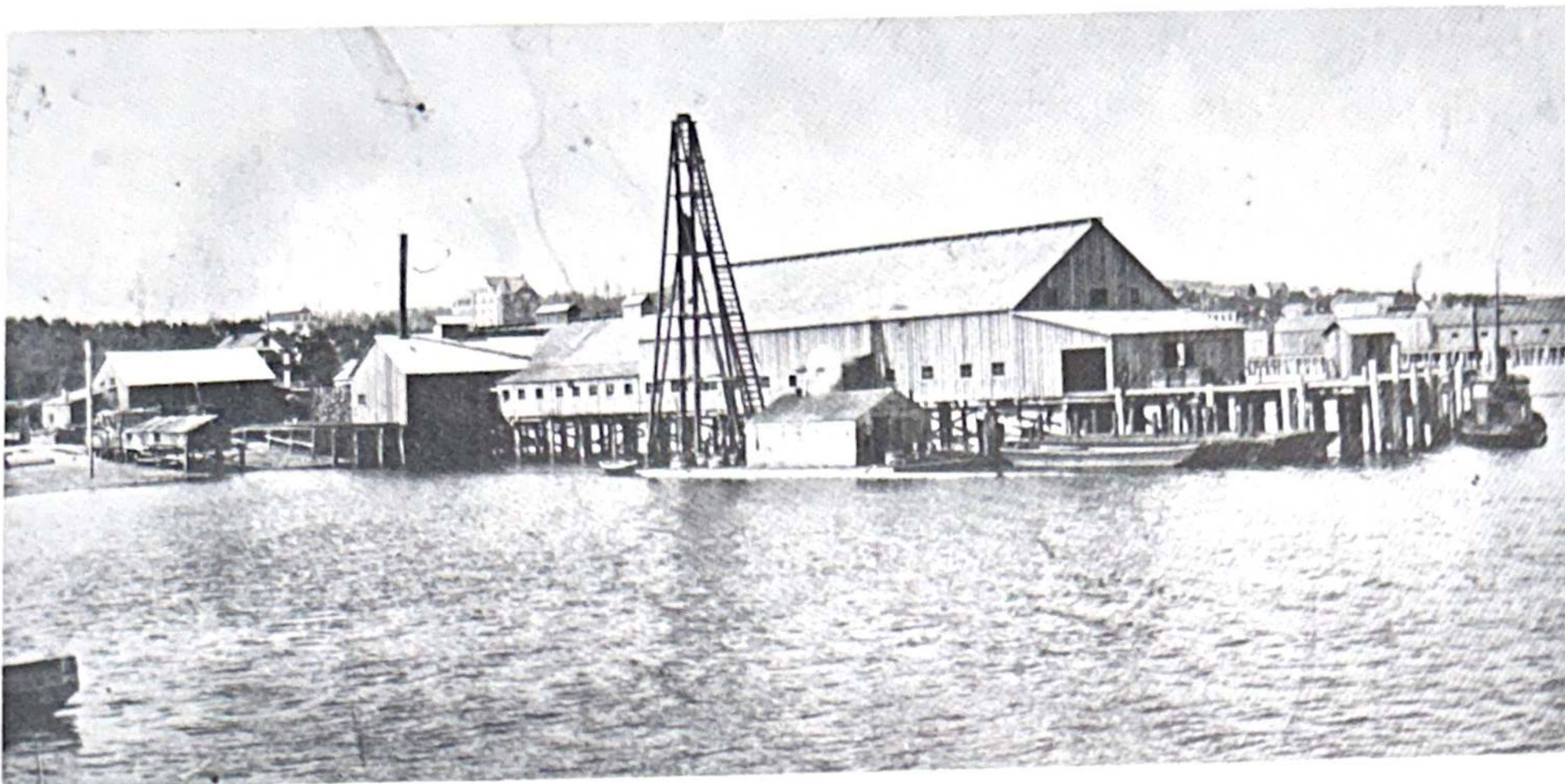


in by boat, processed in plants such as this, and then, as cases of tinned salmon, shipped either by rail (note the tracks in the foreground) or by ship to distant markets.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*



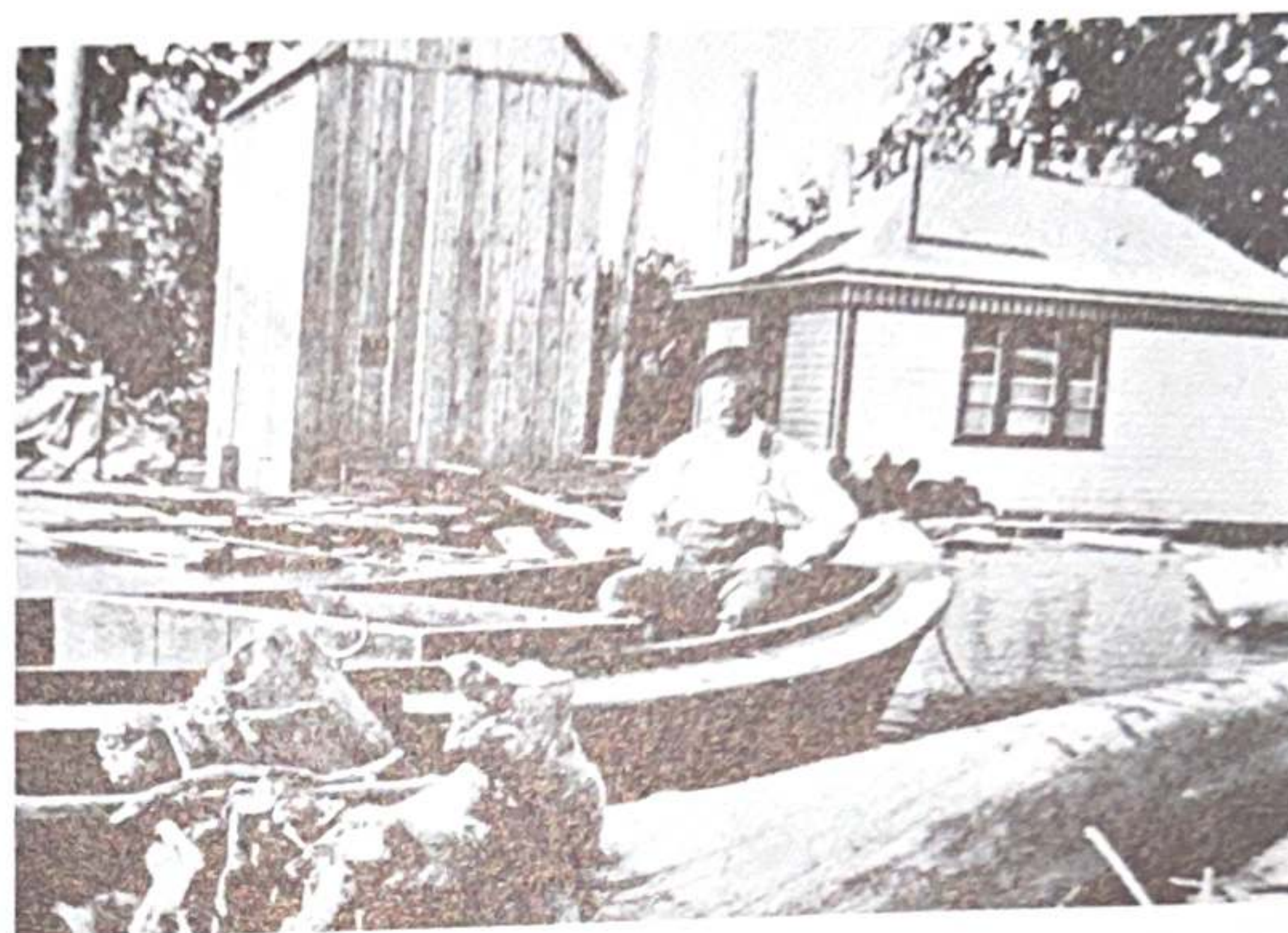




Anacortes waterfront about 1910. The White Crest Fish Company (the Lowman cannery) is in the foreground and the Matheson codfish plant behind it and to the right. The pile driver in the foreground seems to be working, judging by the smoke from its steam engine, either making repairs or starting an addition.  
Picture from  
Mrs. R. B. Lowman

Icelandic fisherman on the Skagit River. For fifteen or twenty years Mr. Larson lived in this houseboat tied up near the McKeon place south of Mount Vernon. He fished in the river, smoked his fish in the wooden building behind him to the left, often gave salmon to the neighbors, always had candy and oranges for the children who visited him, and for them played cylindrical records on his Edison machine with a big horn.

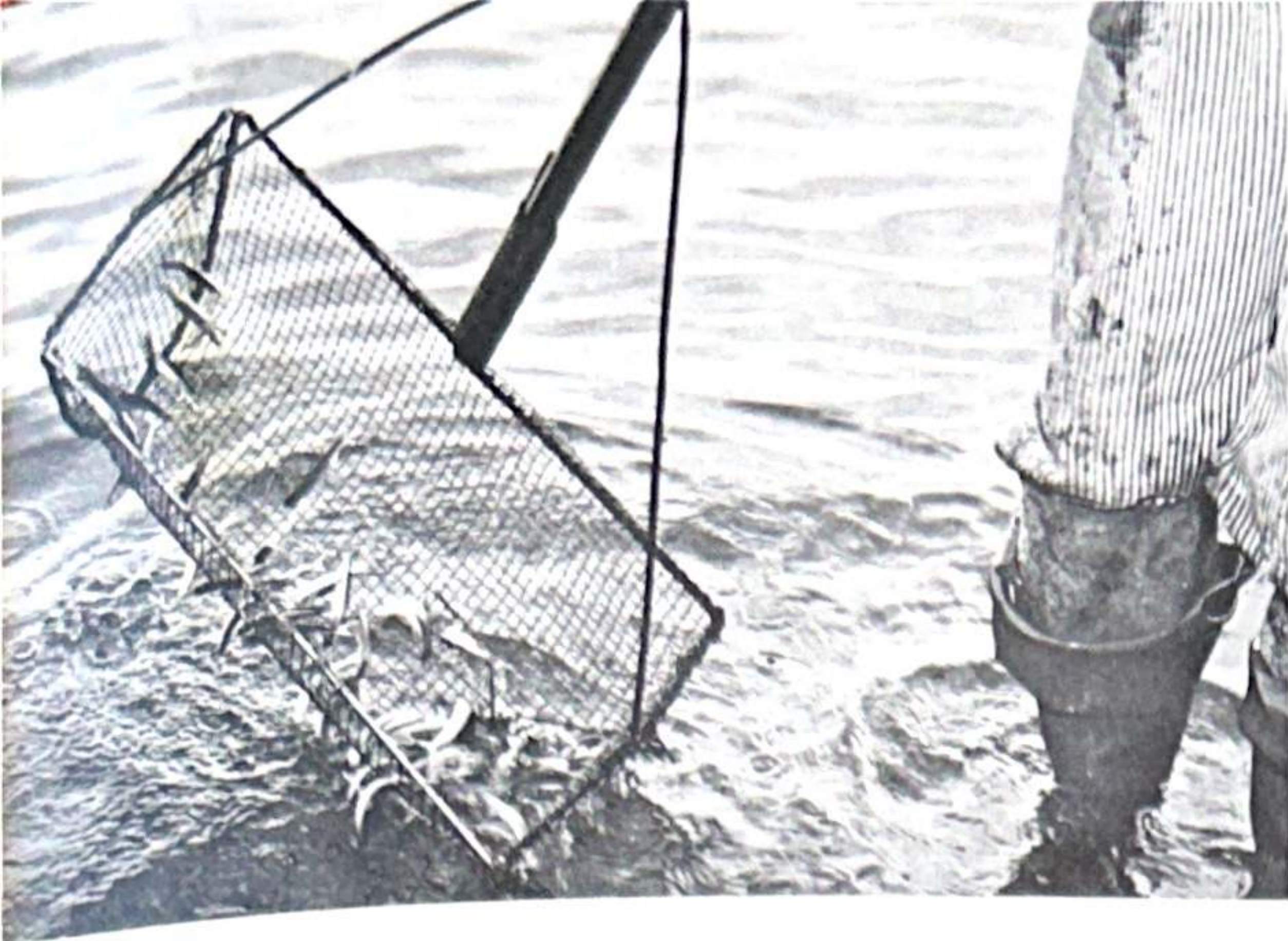
Picture from Lorna Liggett Mattson



Wreck of a pile driver and a boat in Hoosier Bay in the early 1900s; the men had been working putting in a fish trap when they were caught by a storm.

Picture from Mrs. Raymond B. Lowman





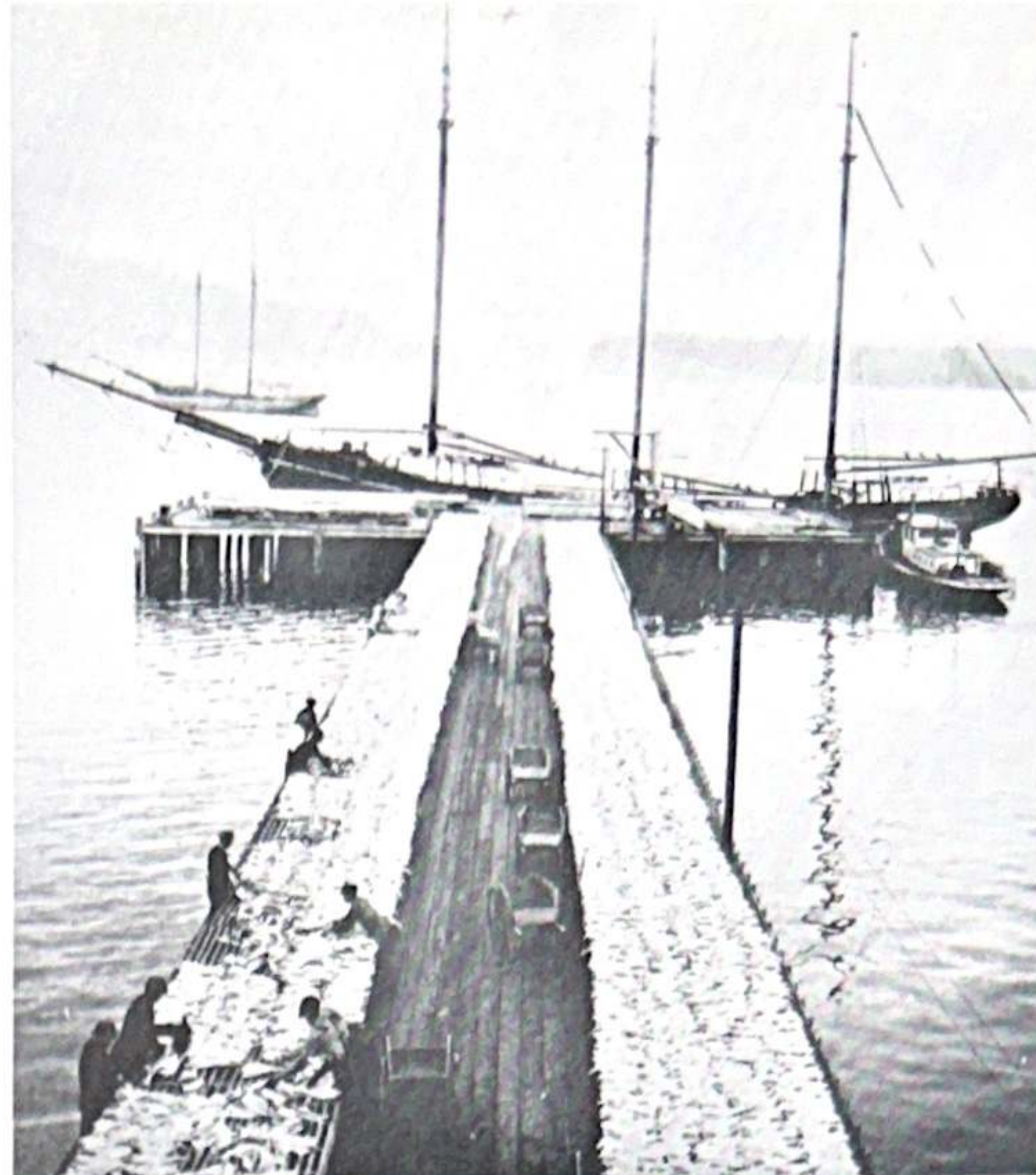
Smelt raking on the rising tide with a homemade smelt rake. This is a recent picture but the technique has been used for a great many years.

*Picture from Glenn Dixon*

Retail businesses which served the farmers and the townspeople prospered. The Tillinghast Seed Company pioneered the growing of vegetable seeds locally and has issued an annual catalog each year since it moved in 1885 from Padilla to LaConner. The Gaches Brothers in LaConner became commission merchants, marketing the hay and oats from the flats. The Polson Implement Company in LaConner, Davis Hardware in Mount Vernon, Knutzen Brothers in Burlington and many others stocked wagons and buggies, plows, harrows, reapers, and other agricultural machinery.

Banks multiplied and grew to handle the money and credit for all these transactions. They were very dignified institutions, usually among the first in town to build in brick and to lay concrete sidewalks in front of the building. The officers, cashiers, and all visible employees were male; if any women worked in a bank they were carefully hidden in inside rooms. Banking policies were as conservative as the business suits of the bankers and only one bank failure is recorded in the period, though there were at least two bank holdups which caused considerable excitement.

General stores continued to be the typical retail outlets of the small communities up to 1920 but in the larger towns specialized business developed: dry goods stores, men's furnishings, groceries, furniture stores, jewelers, ice cream parlors, drug stores, cigar stores occasionally with a wooden Indian in front, butcher shops, shoe stores, shoe shine parlors, millinery stores, hardware stores, music stores, and many others. Except for millinery, women's clothing was still made at home or by dressmakers or bought from the mail order catalogs of Bellas Hess, the National Cloak and Suit Com-



The schooner "Fannie Dutard" which sailed each year for the Matheson Codfish Company for a summer of fishing in Bering Sea. She has returned with her catch which were cleaned and salted when caught and stored in her hold. Now they are spread out to dry before being packaged.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*



Mount Vernon State Bank, 1909. Left to right: George Marble, R. L. Davis, Robert Small, Frank Pickering.

*Skagit County Historical Museum*

Sedro Woolley. The C. E. Bingham Bank about 1915. Men from l to r: Quindy Bingham, A. H. Bingham, Charles Bingham Jr., Charles Bingham Sr.

*Picture from Jess Knutzen*







Conway. The Post Office and John Melkild's store probably around 1915. John Melkild, Ed Sande, and Robert Hanstad in front. Note that the store is built high above the ground because of the frequent flooding at Conway.  
*Picture from Ragna Hanstad Moore*



Conway. Inside John Melkild's store in early 1900s, perhaps 1910. On the top shelf at the right are Roman Meal, Bran, and Kellogg's Toasted Corn Flakes. The cigar counter is in the foreground, the candy counter next to it, and a big wheel of Colby cheese behind them. Fresh oranges are on the left. The men are John Melkild, Robert Hanstad and Ed Sande. The customer is Mrs. Hammack.  
*Picture from Ragna Hanstad Moore*



Conway. The John L. Melkild store employed Edwin Sande to deliver purchases to customers.  
*Picture from Ragna Hanstad Moore*

Conway. The Conway-Fir Trading Union around 1915 was using a truck for deliveries to customers. Sivert Raner is the driver.  
*Picture from Ragna Hanstad Moore*

The Conway-Fir Trading Union was a general store. Upstairs was a large meeting room where there has evidently just been a large gathering before this picture was taken.  
*Picture from Ragna Hanstad Moore*





pany, or perhaps Sears and Roebuck or Montgomery Ward. After the post office instituted parcel post service on January 1, 1913, even more use was made of the mail order catalogs since parcel post was more convenient for those on rural routes than express or freight.

Men's furnishing stores sold ready-made suits and shirts as well as underwear, socks, suspenders, ties, and belts, but a man who wanted a better fit in his suit would go to one of the numerous tailors. Dry goods stores sold almost no ready-made dresses but offered all the necessities for home sewing, a fairly wide variety of fabrics and needles, thread, lace, and ribbons. They also sold underwear, blouses and stockings of cotton or wool or possibly even of silk after 1910.

Groceries and many other businesses routinely offered charge accounts for their farm customers and for people in town who wished them. The farmer brought in produce which the store could sell, and the butter, eggs, etc. were credited to his account. He bought in large quantities: sugar and flour in cloth bags of 100 pounds and 49 pounds respectively, crackers by the 10- or 20-pound wooden or tin box, coffee in bulk and ground to order or taken home in the bean to be ground fresh each day. Grocery orders were delivered in town and well out into the country. When a customer paid his bill any odd cents were knocked off — \$12.49 became \$12.45 — and the storekeeper sent home a bag of candy for the children. When one recent immigrant from Luxembourg asked for coffee instead of candy she got it.



Sedro Woolley. The Union Mercantile Company in 1912, a dry goods store. The customer and the male clerk at the left are unidentified. Emerson Hammer is next on the left, then Miss Thomas, William Holtcamp, and Minda Bratley who later became Mrs. Holtcamp.  
Picture from Mrs. William Holtcamp



Mount Vernon. Coble's store. This was a dry goods store which operated in Mount Vernon for many years in the first decades of the century. Minnie Coble is in the dark dress. The clerks and customer are not identified.  
Picture from Skagit County Historical Museum

Anacortes. Soule's Grocery in the early 1900s. It was located where the Sucia Reef Restaurant now stands.  
Picture from Jean Forrest







Burlington.  
Picture from  
Jess Knutzen



Bow. Bow Department Store was a general store which carried a very wide variety of merchandise in 1915 when this picture was made. From left to right are Mr. Crenshaw, the owner; Flossie Shadle Rains, the clerk, and Clyde Des Noyer on the delivery wagon.

Picture from  
Paul Shadle





Bow. Lou Shadle's Meat Market in 1910. Note the stump at the right of the porch. The men in the spring wagon with the crates of chickens are not identified. On the

porch are Lou Shadle, an unknown man, and Charlie Smith.

*Picture from Paul Shadle*

Until about 1914 there were few pennies and very little paper money in circulation. Small change had always been scarce on the frontier. Early day California settlers manufactured their own by chopping Spanish silver dollars into eight wedge shaped pieces, each of which was a "bit." For a long time 25 cents was spoken of as "two bits," 50 cents as "four bits," and 75 cents as "six bits" though the wedge-shaped bits had never circulated here. Paper money was distrusted because until the Federal Reserve System began in 1914 the bills were all issued by banks and in case of a bank failure might become worthless. Silver dollars, \$5, \$10, and \$20 gold pieces were current. One logger went into Douglass Drug Store in Sedro Woolley with a \$5 bill and asked if he could "change this rag into real money." The Sedro Woolley bank robbers in 1914 refused to take any paper money but loaded themselves with gold and silver coins.

*Doris Tursie D/mr Mrs Foster*

Anacortes. Fisher's Paint Store stood between 4th and 5th on Commercial. This picture was made in 1924,

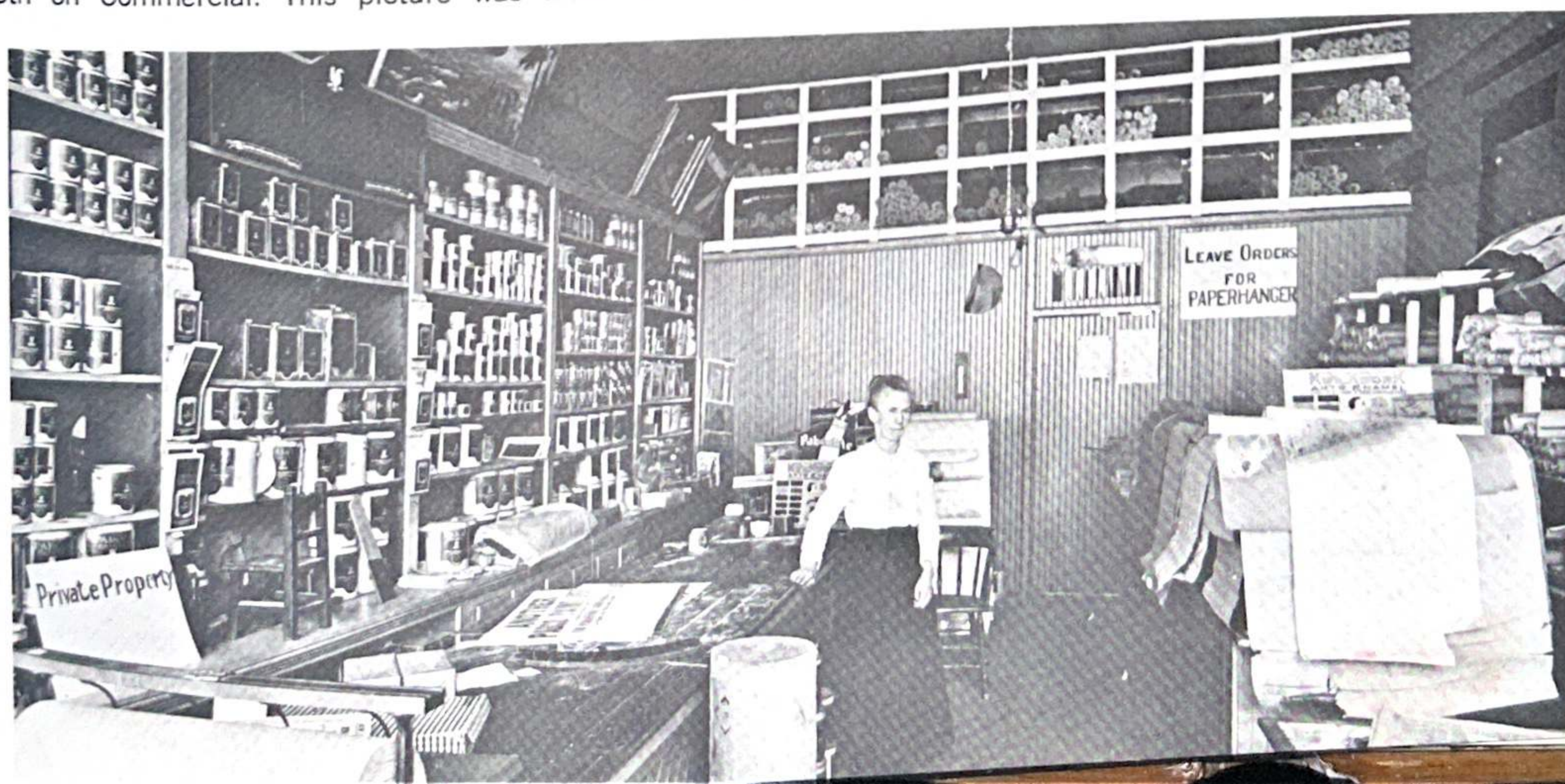


Mount Vernon. Palace Meat Market, some time between 1910 and 1920. Founded by Frank Doolittle but owned at this time by the Emch brothers.

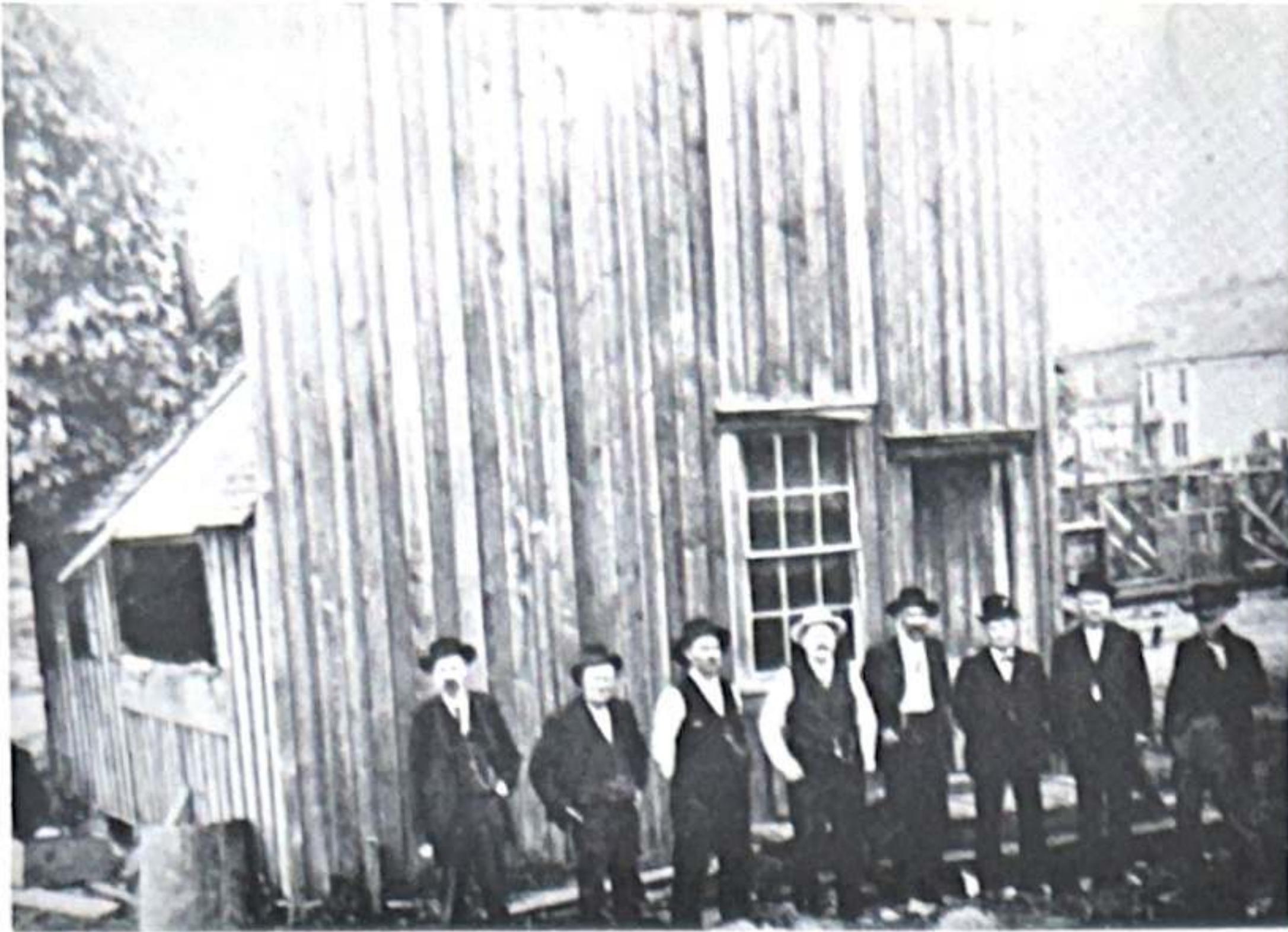
*Picture from Skagit County Historical Museum*

but the store probably looked just about the same in 1920.

*Picture from Mrs. C. F. Fisher*







Mount Vernon. The first photography shop in the 1890s.  
The men are unidentified.  
*From the Skagit County Historical Museum*



Inside the printing room of the Anacortes American. 3rd  
from left, Fred Fisher; 6th from left, Jessie Young.  
*From: Anacortes Museum of History and Art*

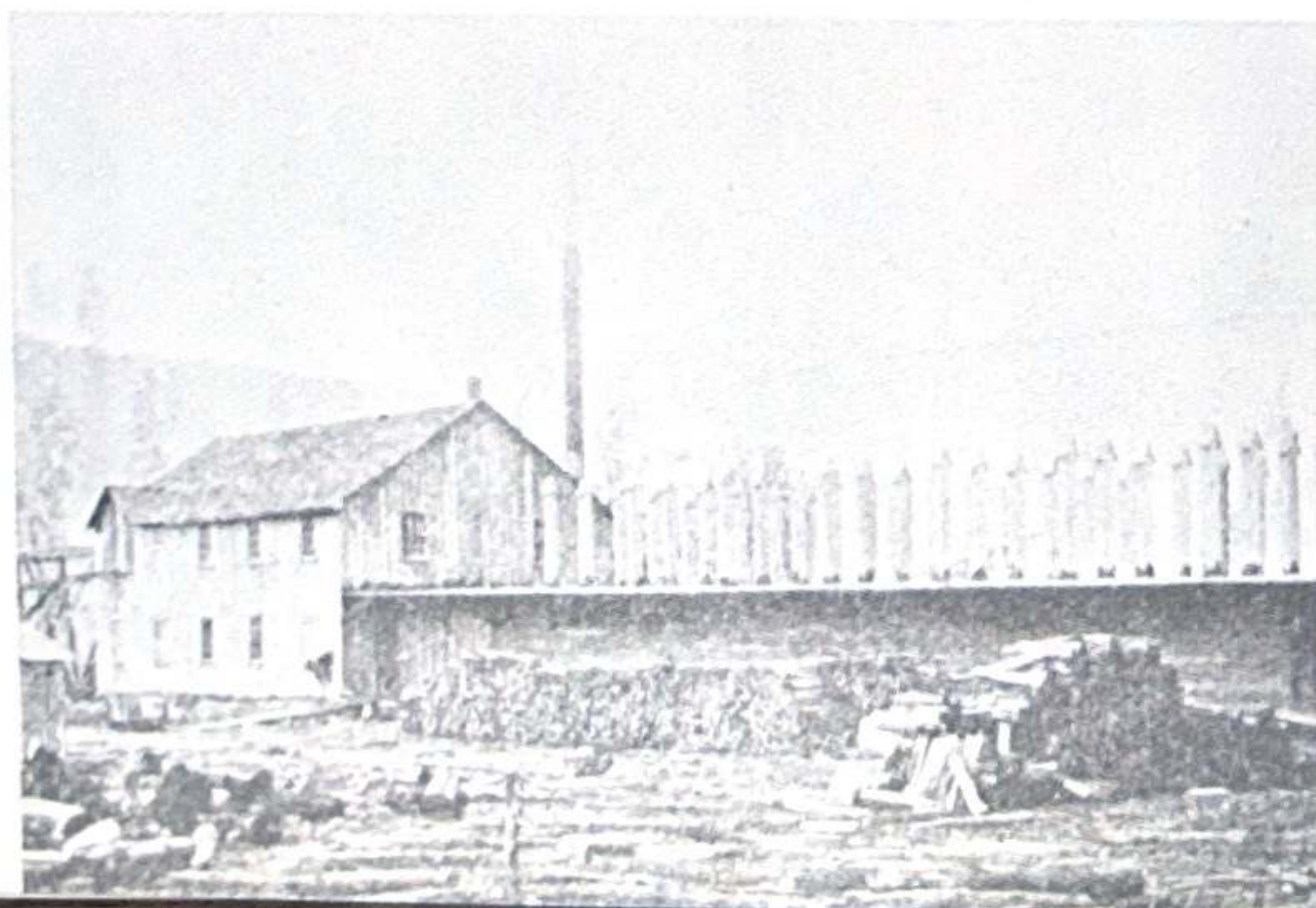


Edison. Barber shop of John Walter and Bill  
Smith about 1914.

*Picture from Edna Walter*

Brick kilns at Alger about 1902, operated by the Alger  
Oil and Mineral Company of Fairhaven.

*Reproduced for the Ronald Holtum collection from  
Sebring's SKAGIT COUNTY ILLUSTRATED, 1903*





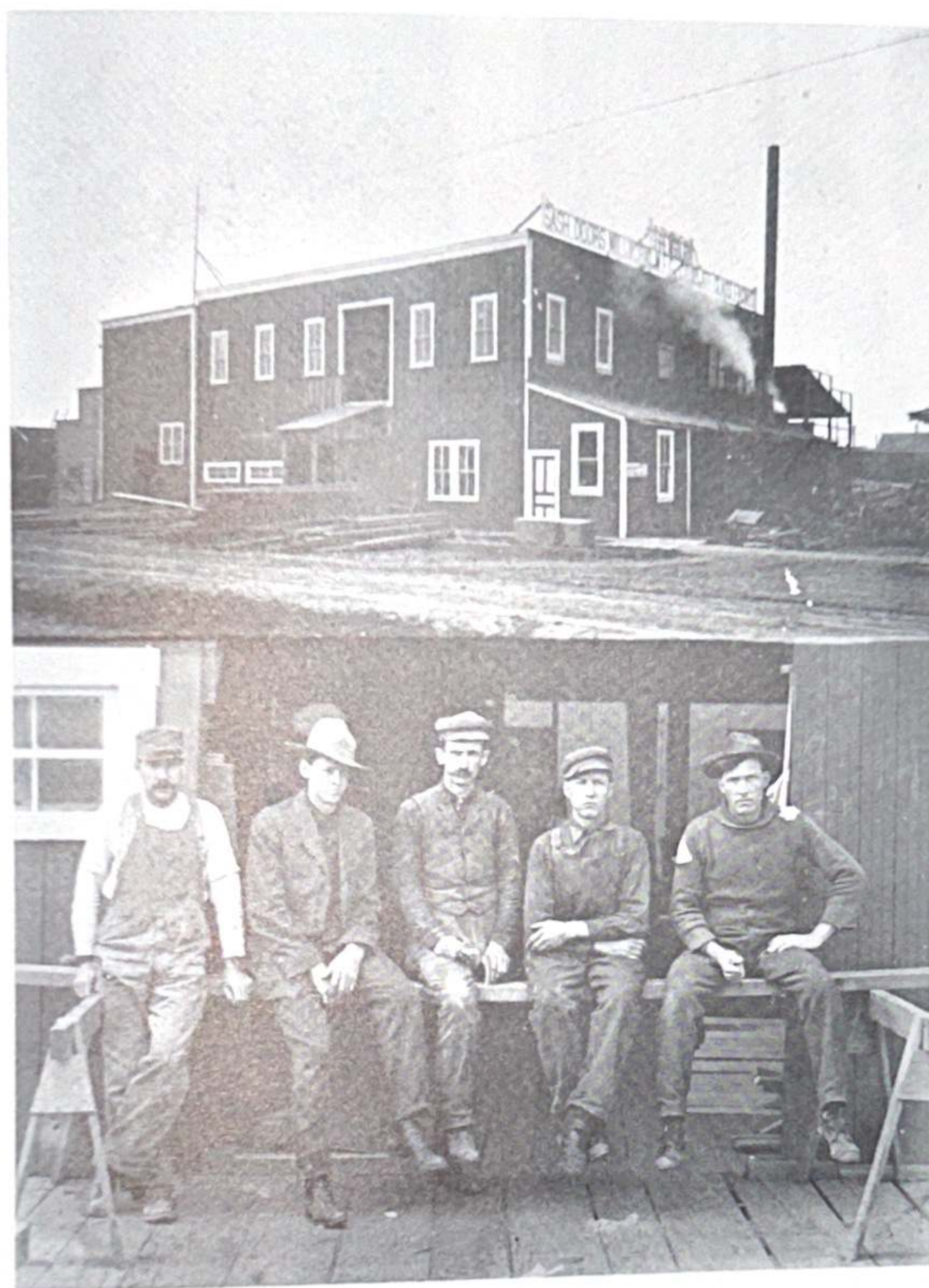


Schwartz Iron Works in Anacortes about 1915. They made the frames which held the salmon cans during processing.  
From: Anacortes Museum of History and Art



Mr. H. H. Shrewsbury's monkey house where he trained wild animals, a hobby evidently supported by his Sash and Door and Millwork Company. Note the monkey and the parrot. Mr. Shrewsbury is with the monkey. Back of him are Joe Munroe, his clerk, and Mrs. Fred Bracker, his bookkeeper.

From the collection of Bill Rivord



Sedro Woolley: Shrewsbury Sash and Door Mill. On left Mr. Riley, on right Fred Bracker. Others unidentified.

From collection of Bill Rivord

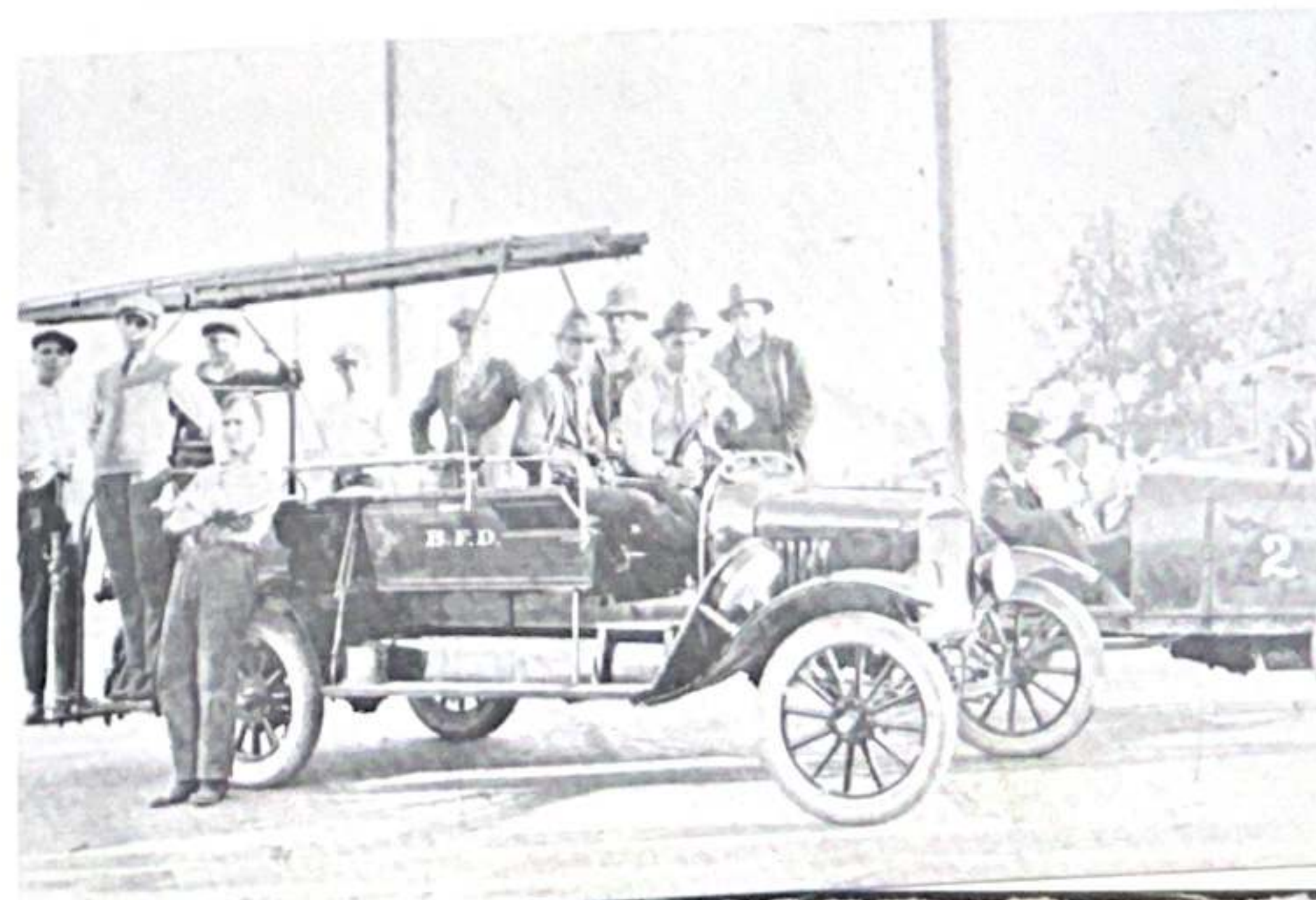
Dr. Richards, Mount Vernon veterinarian, in his buggy in front of the livery stable around 1905.

Skagit County Historical Museum



Firefighting enters the automobile age. Truck of the Burlington Fire Department about 1920. Men on the truck who are identified, 1 to r: 4, Mickey Daniels; 6, Clarence Tennis; 9, Harold Munro; 10, Glen Defoe.

Picture from Clarence Tennis







Sedro Woolley. Linstrom and Jebens Tailor Shop in 1912, the date shown on the Sedro Woolley Hardware Co. calendar on the wall at the right.

*Picture from Paul Miller*



Mount Vernon. The shop of C. R. Rings, Merchant Tailor, where the well dressed man could have his suit made to measure around 1900. Men's clothing stores carried suits and probably the majority of men bought and wore them but the tailor was still an important member of the business community.

*From the Skagit County Historical Museum*



Monkey-puzzle tree, one of many in the county all about the same size because they were bought from the same peddler about 1910.

*Picture by Margaret Willis*



The Pool Hall in Conway owned by Mr. Shea. The sign says "Pool Hall — Tobacco, Cigars, Soft Drinks and Candies."

*Picture from Ragna Moore*



A curious kind of retail business was carried on by peddlers who visited country homes in the years before improved roads and Model T's made towns accessible. A few men and women made their way on foot from house to house, carrying their stock in packs on their backs and bags in their hands, and spreading out their wares in the farm sitting rooms or kitchens before the admiring eyes of the women and children. Each had particular specialties — table cloths, napkins, yard goods, occasional dresses for children, costume jewelry, laces, embroidered linens, and ruchings. Sometimes there were pins, needles, thread, elastic, and embroidery hoops. About 1910 one man in a wagon left behind him a lasting memorial — he sold monkey puzzle trees (*araucaria araucana*) over much of the county, many of them still growing today and all approximately 40 feet tall. No one seems to remember whether he sold any other kinds of trees or shrubs.

Gypsy caravans also came through the county but they were not as welcome as the peddlers. People kept a wary eye on their horse-drawn covered wagons. The women sold trinkets and told fortunes and the men traded horses but when they left an area chickens and horses might disappear with them.

This was the period when telephone service was born and was passing through its infancy. Anacortes had a few telephones in 1891 and Mount Vernon and Sedro had their first in 1894. The Sears and Roebuck catalog of 1897 offers telephone instruments for the first time, noting that some of the Bell patents had expired and warning against buying instruments from unknown companies. Each phone had its battery, its bell, and a crank for ringing the bell. Groups of neighbors bought instruments and rigged up a wire along fence posts and trees to connect their phones. Everyone had a list of the rings of the other phones; a telephone exchange was not needed since everyone was on the same line and every instrument rang when anyone turned the crank. Listening in on other people's calls was an accepted practice. As the number of subscribers grew, better wires and telephone exchanges were necessary and little home-owned phone companies grew up all over the country. The Bell system was extending its service and the Sunset Telephone Company began to take advantage of the opportunities for long distance conversations while the little rural phone companies extended their free service over the country districts of the county, organizing into a county-wide service in 1917. Few individuals in the towns sub-



Nell Quackenbush Wheelock, lineman for the telephone and also operator in Concrete. This picture dates from 1919 and also shows the other operator, Jessie Owens.  
*Picture from Angele Howe Cupples*

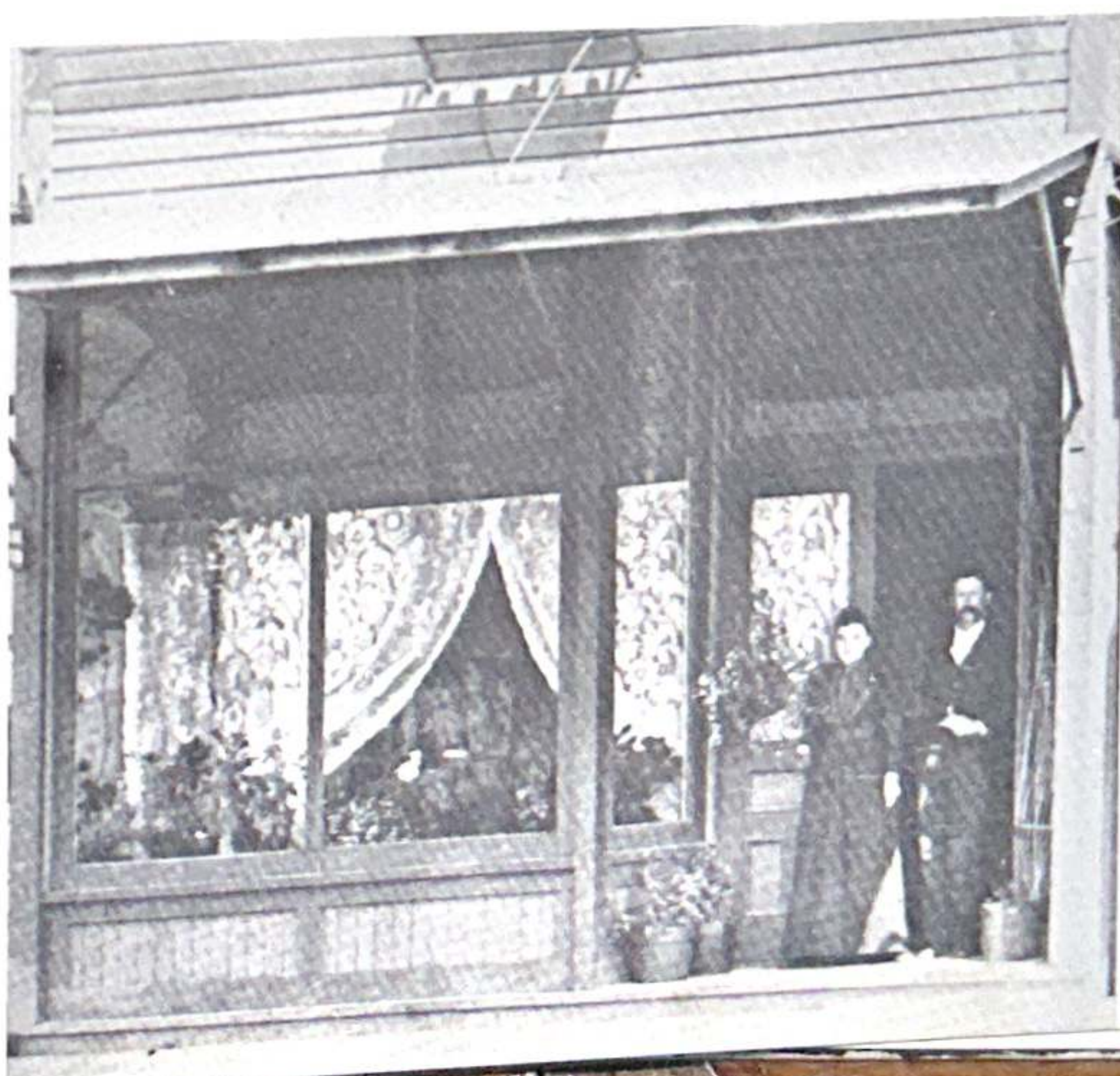


Telephone office in Concrete in the second decade of the century.

*Picture from Angele Howe Cupples*

Mount Vernon. The first telephone office around 1900. Man and woman are unidentified.

*Picture from Skagit County Historical Museum*







The Anacortes telephone exchange about 1906. Between 1897 and 1902 Josephine Trulson was the only operator. By 1906 there were the two shown here, Marion Childs and Della Davidson.

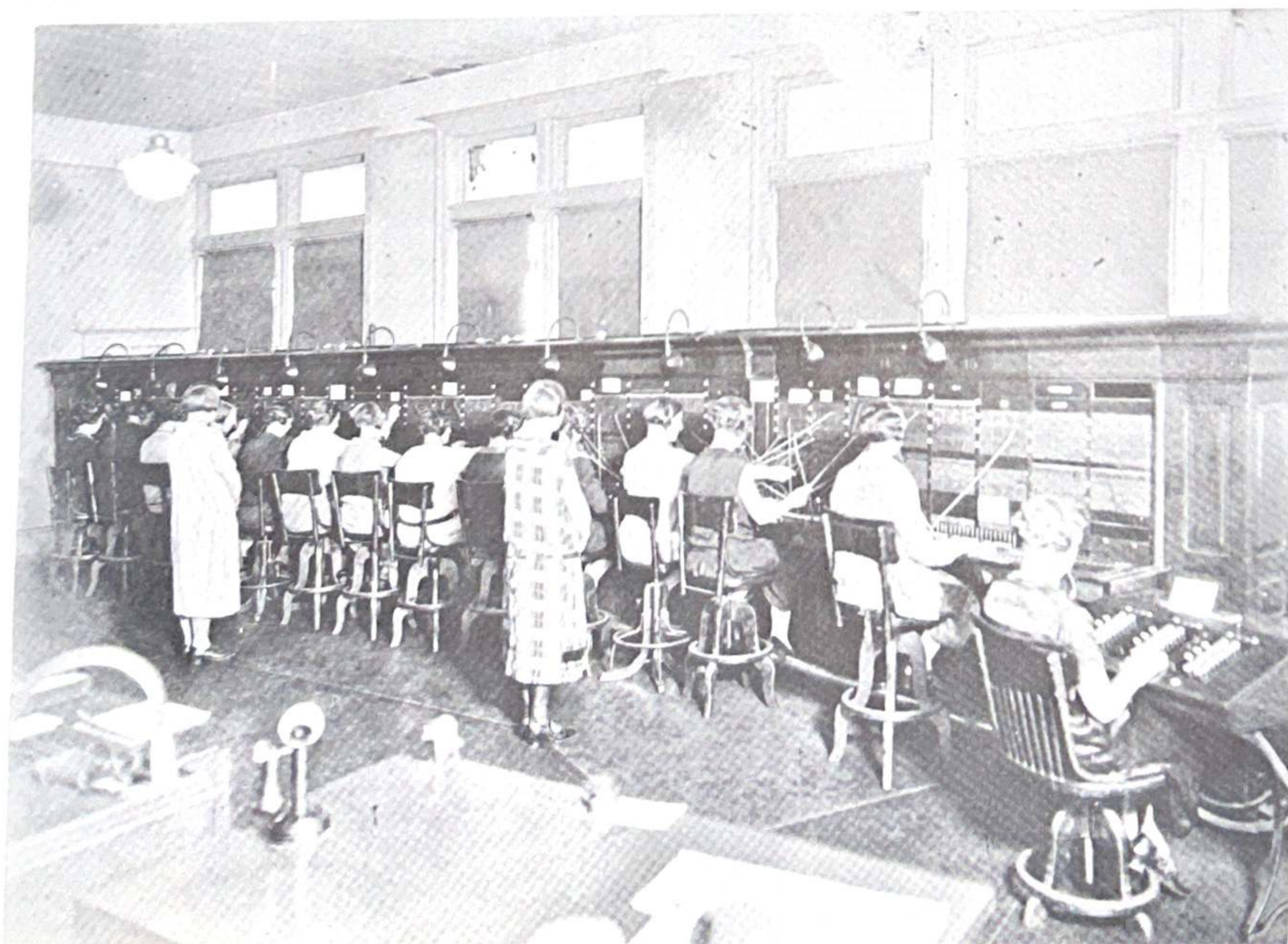
*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

scribed to the rural system though business firms serving the farmers always did.

The telephone directory of the Sunset Telephone and Telegraph Company for 1897 has 20 pages of listings for Seattle, 2 1/2 for Everett, 2 1/2 for Whatcom and Fairhaven. The other places listed are Snohomish with 25 subscribers, Anacortes with 21 of which 6 were residences, Mount Vernon with 11 of which the only residence was that of George McLean, LaConner with 3 (J. H. Chilberg and the Gaches and Polson stores), and Blaine with 7, two residences, two livery stables, a hotel, the city hall, and the Alaska Packers Association. By 1903 there were 140 names listed in Anacortes, 62 in Mount Vernon, 24 in LaConner, 115 in Sedro Woolley, and 7 in Edison.

Customers were urged to use long distance in preference to the telegraph but were advised to plan the conversation carefully in advance—a necessity since rates were calculated by the quarter minute and a 15-second conversation to Southern California cost \$1.75; a whole minute was \$4 and each ensuing eight seconds 10 cents. The directory says, "You can easily transmit 30 words in 1/4 minute. Try the following: 'I did not telegraph, fearing you were out of town. Could not spare the time to go by train. Must have your decision now, so called you by telephone.'"

Transcontinental telephone service did not come until the late twenties and dialing of numbers still later. When central asked, "Number, please," the caller gave the number orally and the



Mount Vernon. Telephone exchange around 1920. All connections were still made by giving the number orally to the operator who then made the connection manually.

*Picture from Skagit County Historical Museum*



operator made the connection manually on the switchboard. The position of telephone operator was always a respected one and occasionally an individual operator became famous. Such a one was Nell Quackenbush Wheelock of Concrete who not only managed the office and took a shift at the switchboard but also climbed the poles and repaired the lines and on weekends played the violin for dances.

While loggers, mill workers, farmers, and merchants went about their various tasks other men explored the hills for minerals, enduring untold hardships in the search for sudden wealth. Coal had been discovered across the Skagit from Hamilton in the 1870s and was mined for a time. Its location across the river from the railroad and the fact that the anticipated iron mines were never exploited caused the coal mines to be abandoned after a few years. The Bennett or Cokedale mines, six miles from Sedro Woolley, however, were worked for 19 years and at one time supplied coal to 50 coking ovens. Skagit Steel in Sedro Woolley had been fabricating metal since the 1890s before being taken over by Bendix in the 1960s. A talc mine above Marblemount has been worked off and on for years on a limited basis.

Prospectors scrambled up every creek and over every mountain side looking for gold and minerals. Hundreds of claims were staked, stream beds were washed for gold, and mine shafts driven into rocky hills along all the tributaries of the Skagit. There is no question that there are valuable metals in the mountains of the county but the problems of transportation and the small size and isolation of the deposits has so far meant that costs have exceeded output in every line but one.

The clay and limestone where the Baker River joins the Skagit proved to be the proper ingredients for cement. The Washington Cement plant began operating at Cement City in 1905. The larger one of the Superior Portland Cement Company was built soon after on the west side of the Baker River. Baker and Cement City joined to make the town of Concrete which prospered for many years from its cement industry, its mills, and the logging and agriculture around it. The dust from the cement plants coated everything, however. Rains changed it on the roofs to a brittle layer of concrete which had to be chipped off periodically to keep the shingles from rotting.

At the time when the "Dollar Way" was built as a demonstration, the paving of roads was just

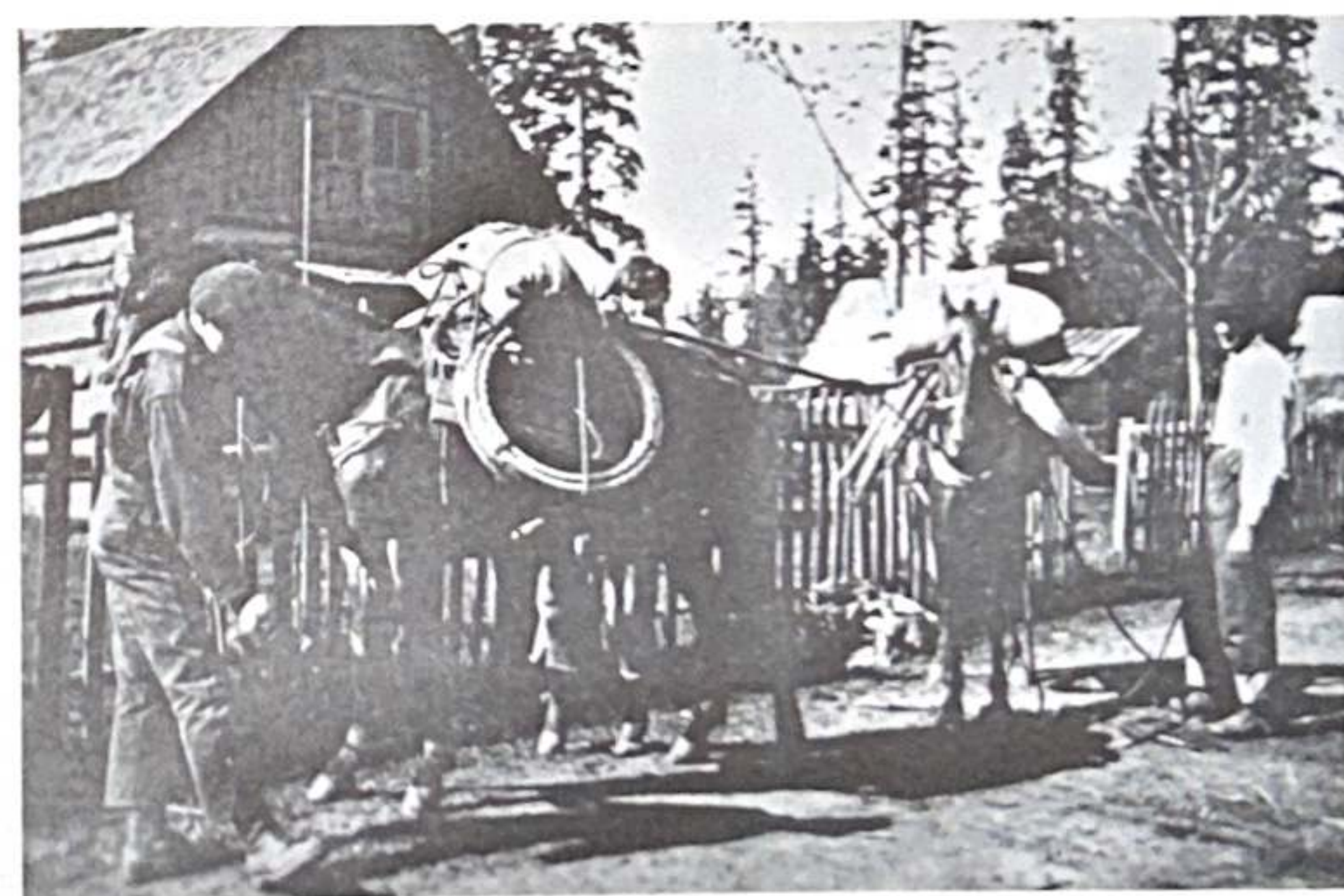


Prospecting party for Mount Baker around 1900.  
A Darius Kinsey photograph from Minnie Lederle Batey



Bill Perry's livery stable and pack horses at Rockport in the early 1900s. In Rockport there was little need for renting carriages or wagons.

Picture from Tom Benton

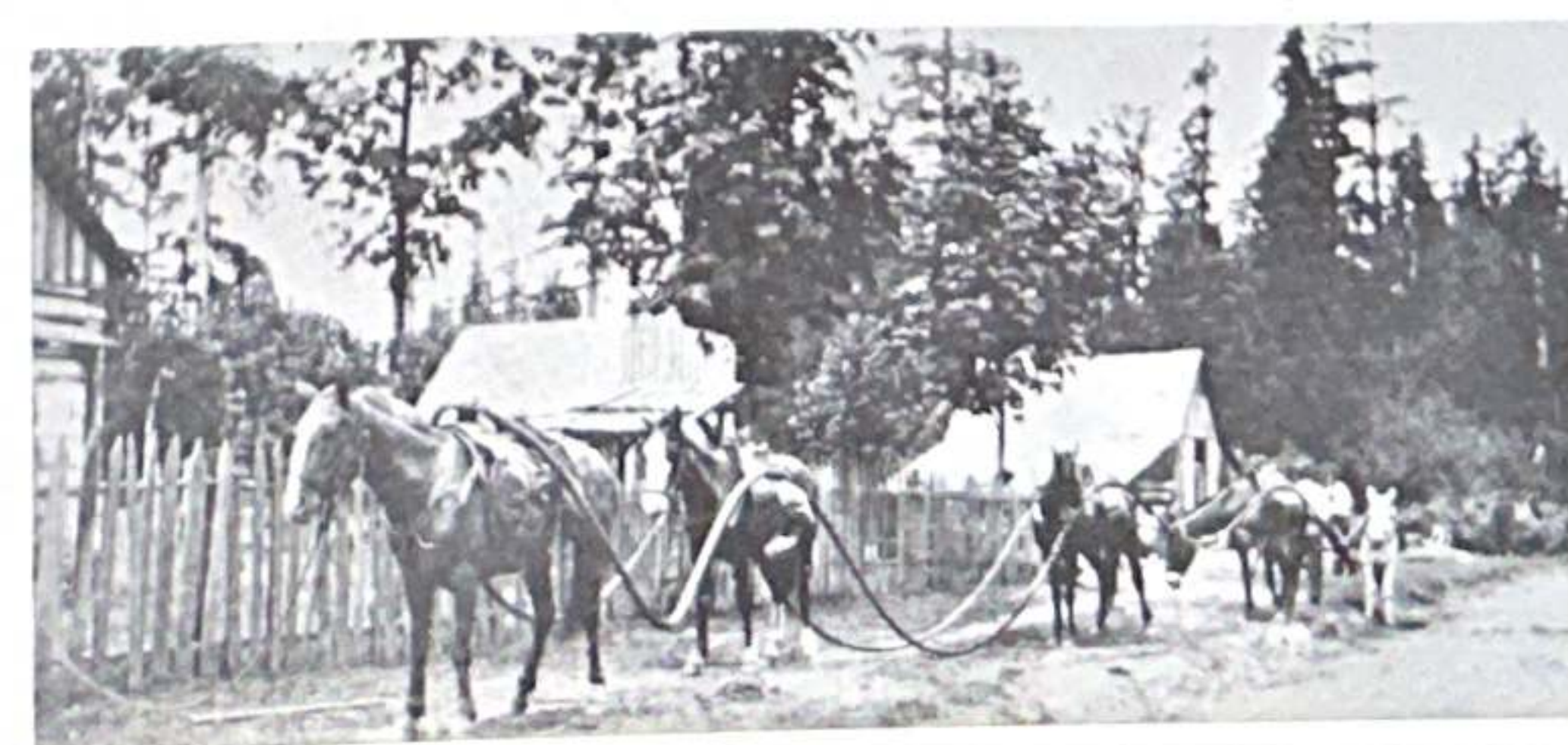


Marblemount pack train loading cable to be packed to the upper Skagit for bridge over the river at Ruby Creek to give access to the mines.

Picture from Hazel Tracy

Pack train leaving Marblemount in the early 1900s with cable for the bridge over the Skagit at Ruby Creek to give access to the mines. Herman Rohde kept the pack horses at Marblemount and rented them to miners, prospectors, and sportsmen.

Picture from Hazel Tracy







Edison. Lindquist Blacksmithing Shop about 1914. The man who is holding the horses is unidentified. The others, l to r: Fred Lindquist, Martin Lindquist and Gus A. Lindquist (child).

*Picture from Ellen Lindquist Hanson*



Edison. Lindquist Blacksmithing around 1914. Fred Lindquist is shoeing the horse which is still wearing its work collar. The man on the left is A. Martin Lindquist and the child Eric Lindquist.

*Picture from Ellen Lindquist Hanson*



Some of the horses, carriages, carts, and wagons of the Anacortes Transfer Company in front of their Livery Stable and Feed Store at 5th and Commercial. This was probably around 1900.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

Edison Livery Stable about 1914, showing the kinds of horses and rigs available. From left to right: a spring wagon, a single seat buggy, a riding horse, a Percheron horse for heavy hauling, and a carry-all, the horse-drawn ancestor of the station wagon.

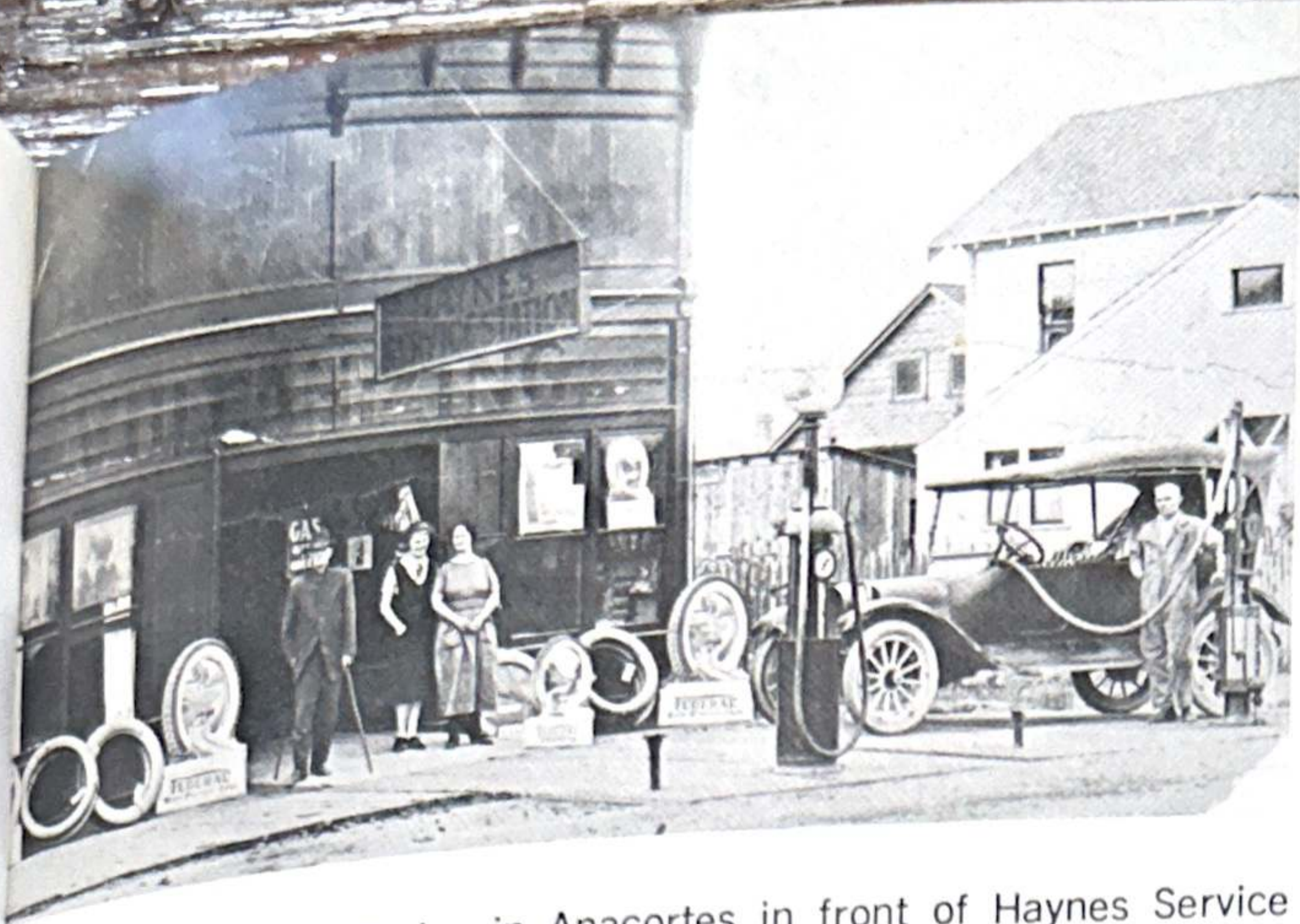
*Picture from Ellen Lindquist Hanson*



Anacortes about 1910. The Island Transfer Company began operating trucks though the sign still says "Livery Feed and Transfer."

*From the Collection of Wallie Funk*





The first Dodge in Anacortes in front of Haynes Service Station which advertised "Vulcanizing" across the front and has two gas pumps.  
From the collection of Wallie Funk

beginning. The ensuing years saw a tremendous expansion of concrete paving and corresponding business for the cement plants.

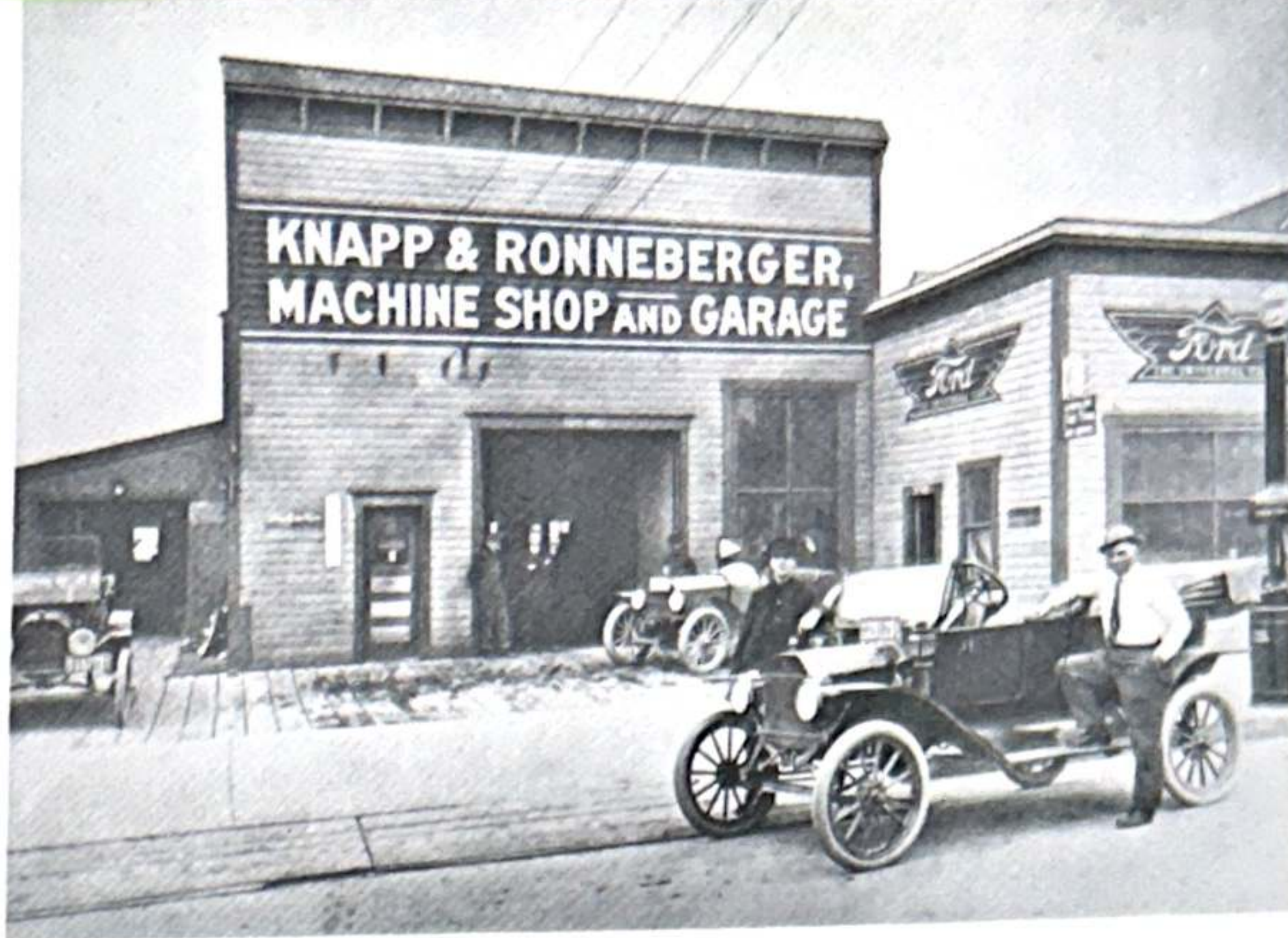
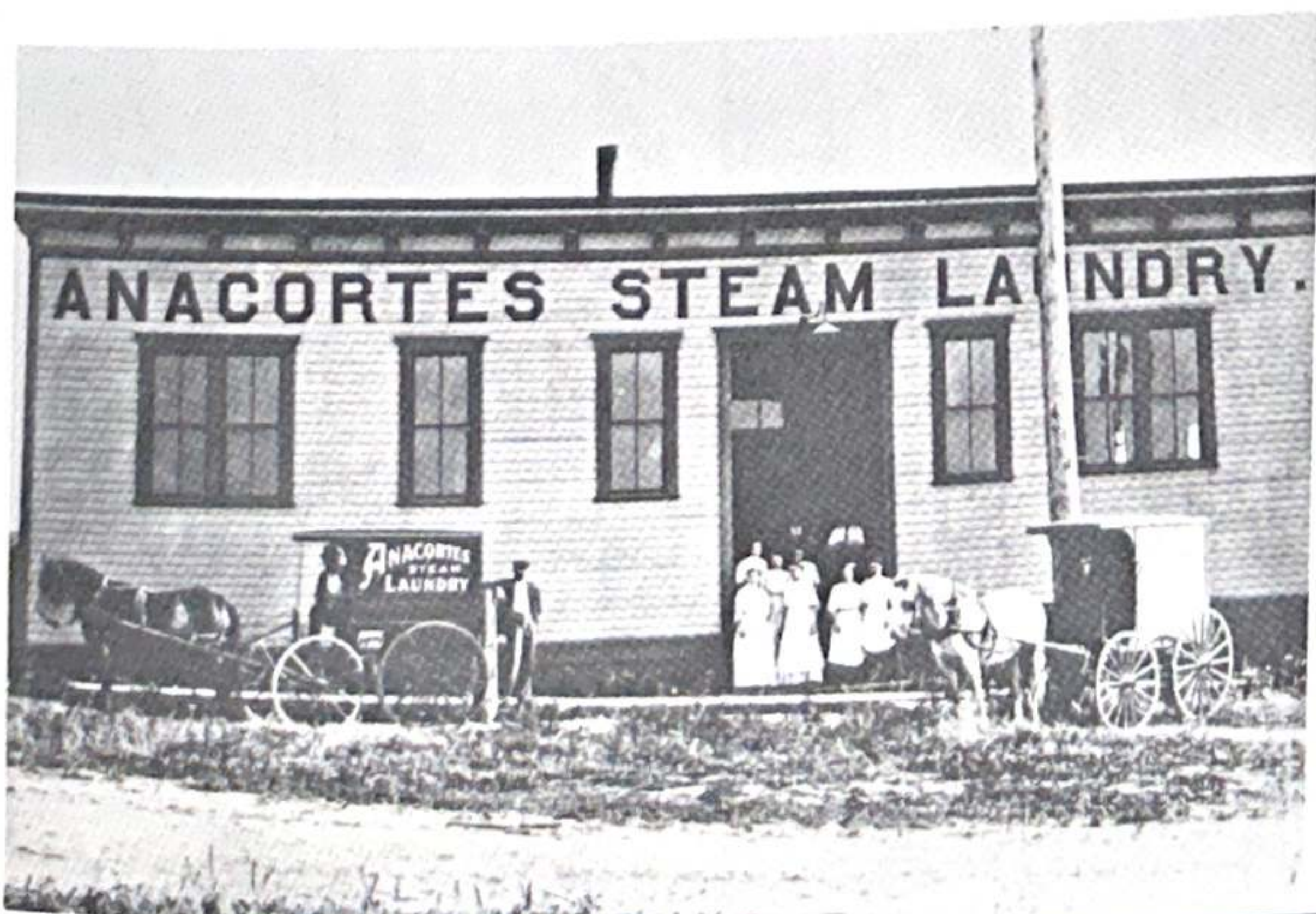
As automobiles replaced horses, livery stables had to change or die. Many became transfer companies, using trucks instead of wagons for hauling. Some were already running stages from town to town; these substituted automobiles for the horse-drawn vehicles. Blacksmith shops often became iron works, doing forging, welding, and repairing.

In 1903 the makers of automobiles were advertising in the local papers for agents to sell their cars. By 1911 some hardware and harness shops were showing and selling automobiles and soon dealerships were established. Repairing internal combustion engines interested many young men. The cars of the time needed plenty of repairs so the garages did good business. These garages were the only places to buy gasoline and oil, to get your car greased or its tires repaired until service stations began to appear about 1920.

A new refinement came with sidewalks and pavements. It became possible to keep shoes clean and shined. People who did not wish to do the job themselves could visit the shoe shine parlor, usually in or near the best hotel, and get a professional shine for 15 cents.

Anacortes Steam Laundry with employees in doorway and the wagons in front which collected and delivered the bundles of laundry.

From: Anacortes Museum of History and Art



The Ford salesroom and garage in Anacortes about 1915.  
From the collection of Wallie Funk



The Progressive Garage was the Stage Depot in Anacortes when this picture was taken, probably about 1920. The advertising sign indicates that there were enough washing machines to make it worth while to advertise washing machine soap. All the passengers' luggage was carried in racks on the running boards—no trunks yet.

From the collection of Wallie Funk

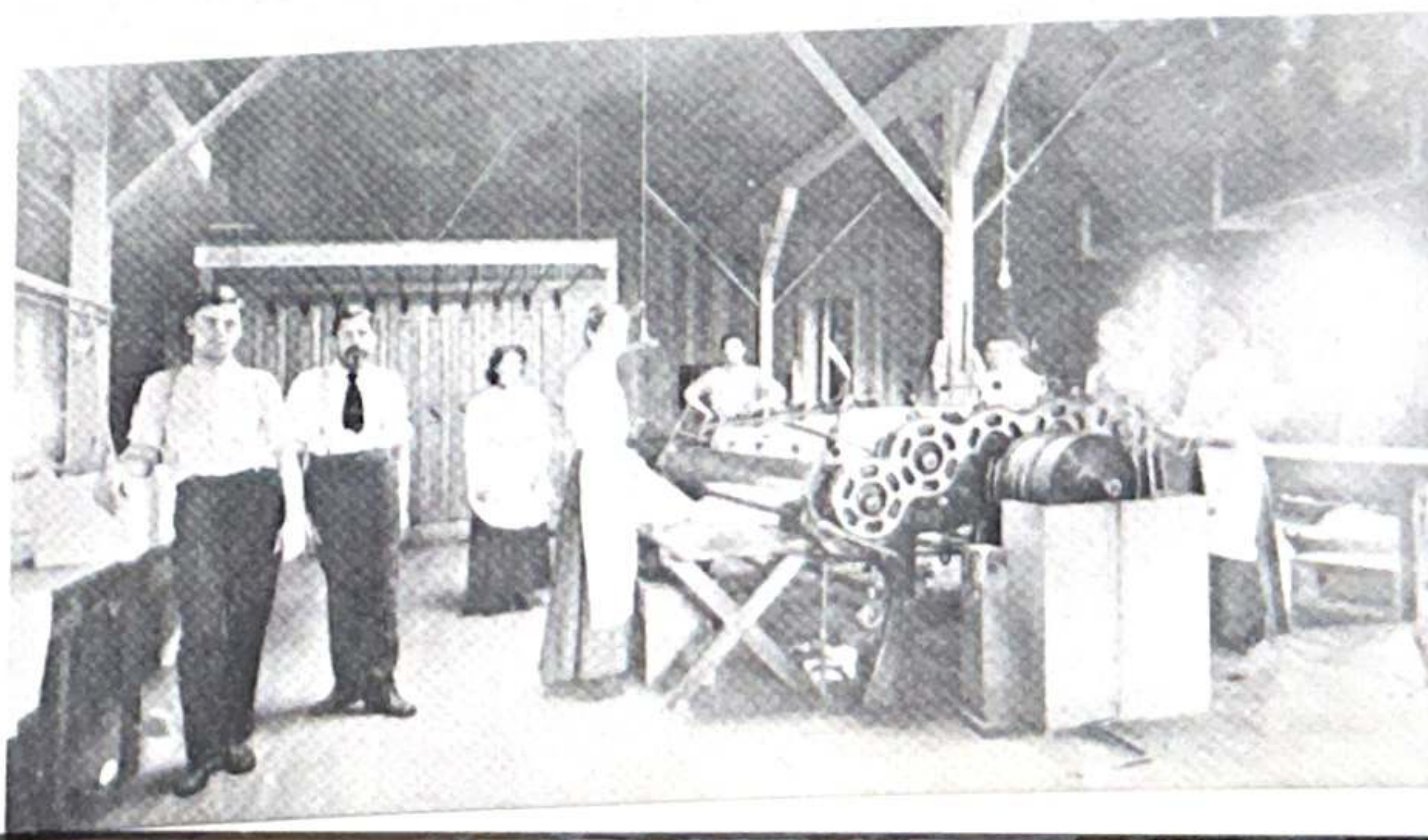


Mount Vernon. The delivery truck of the Skagit Steam Laundry some time between 1915 and 1920 and some of the workers in the laundry. In front of the truck, Nellie Cotton and Martha Cotton, at wheel Maggie Gabrielson, seated by her Christina Gabrielson. Girl standing on running board is not identified.

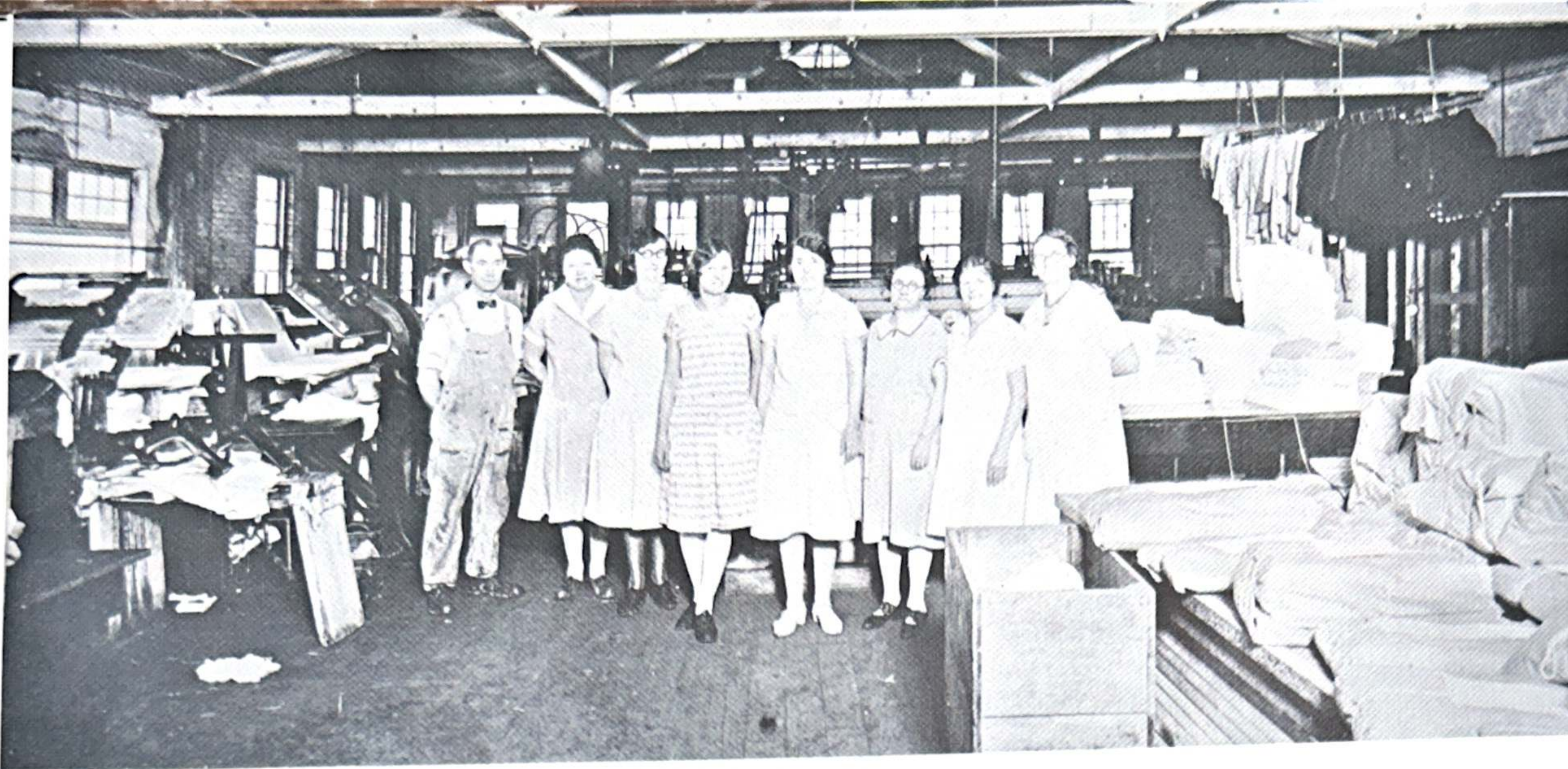
Picture from Margaret Benedict Southwick

Interior view of Anacortes Steam Laundry. Machine in the center is a mangle for ironing sheets and other flat things.

From: Anacortes Museum of History and Art







Mount Vernon. Interior of the Skagit Steam Laundry about 1920.

*Picture from Margaret Benedict Southwick*

Another luxury which was becoming more easily available was ice cream. Making it at home had always been possible. All it required was a 25-pound cake of ice, smashed to fragments in an old gunny sack, rock salt to mix with it in the ice cream freezer, custard in the can of the machine, and a lot of muscle to turn the crank until the heavy turning certified that the mixture was freezing. Then the dasher was removed and eagerly licked by the children while the ice cream was left in the can, packed in ice and salt till serving time. This was obviously a process reserved for special occasions.

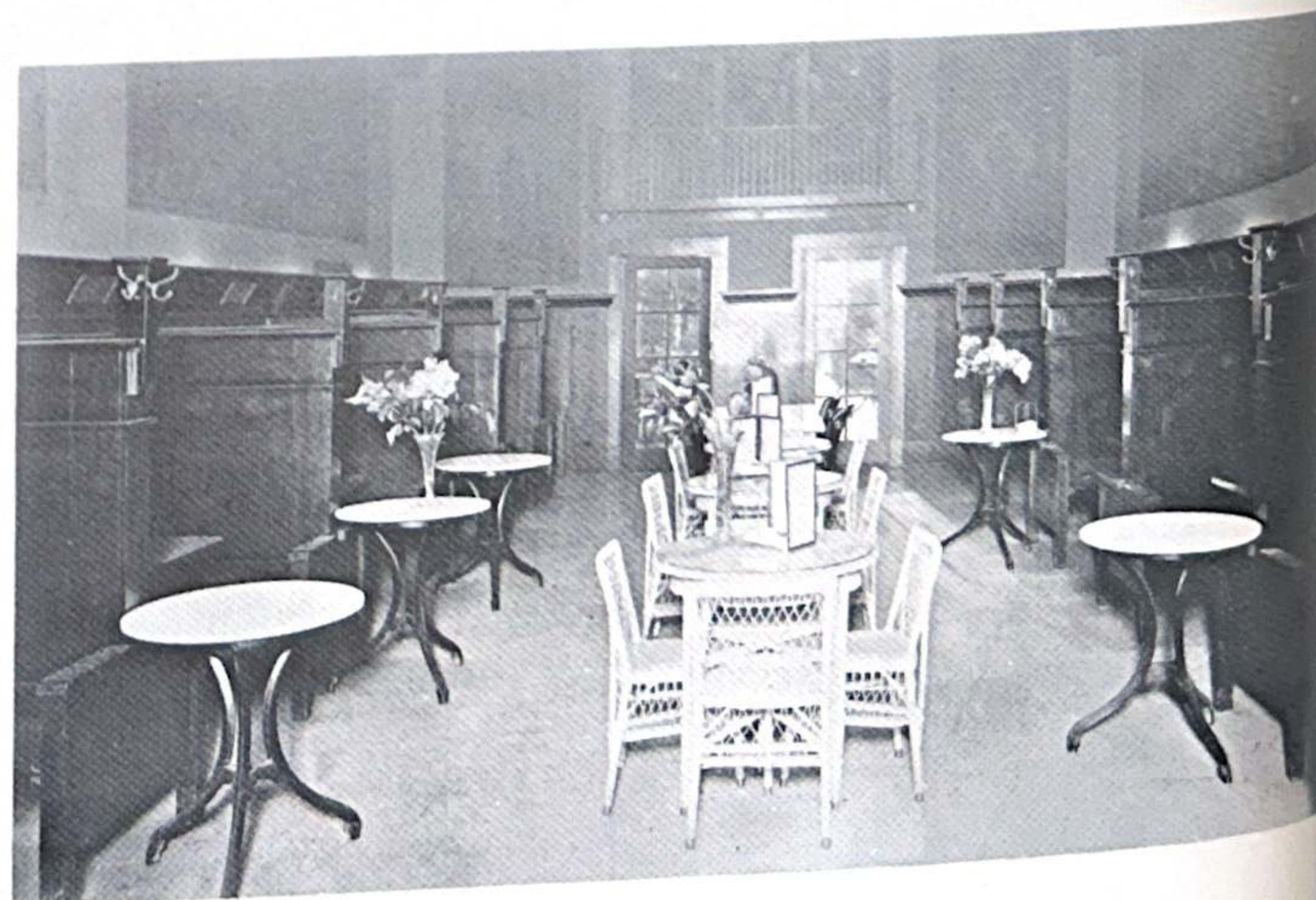
The ice cream parlor, on the other hand, was always there, offering sodas for 5 cents, ice cream sodas for 10 cents, and sundaes for 15 cents to 25 cents. The ultimate luxury was the banana split with three scoops of ice cream and a different sauce on each. Drug stores often had soda fountains but they could not compare with the glamor of the ice cream parlor.

Recreation as a business was just beginning in early decades of the century. Some people owned boats but there were few for rent. Hunters and fishermen could stay in comfort at Davis Ranch at Cedar Bar or at the Log Cabin Inn at Marblemount, but most camped out. Few people took long automobile trips yet. Camp grounds at the beach were free.

As World War I ended, the year of the Versailles Peace Conference passed, and 1920 dawned, Skagit County was prosperous on the whole but somewhat uncertain of the future with agricultural prices dropping, war contracts cancelled, and bad times in the woods, the mills, and the fisheries. Few people were wealthy, few were very poor, and almost everyone was optimistic about the future.



Sedro Woolley soda fountain.  
*From Skagit County Historical Museum*



Mount Vernon. Jerry Foster's Ice Cream Parlor about 1919.

*Picture from Skagit County Historical Museum*



THE OLD SETTLER  
ANTHEM OF THE WASHINGTON PIONEERS  
by Francis Henry

I have wandered all over the country  
Prospecting for silver and gold,  
I've tunneled, hydraulicked and cradled,  
And I have been frequently sold.

For one who gets riches by mining  
There's many a hundred grows poor,  
So I made up my mind to try farming,  
The only pursuit that is sure.

Then rolling my grub in my blanket  
I left all my tools in the ground  
And started one morning to shank it  
For the country around Puget Sound.

Arriving flat broke in midwinter  
I found it enveloped in fog  
And covered all over with timber  
Thick as bristles on a razorback hog.

When I looked at the prospects so gloomy  
The tears trickled down o'er my face.  
I thought that my troubles had brought me  
To the edge of the jumping-off place.

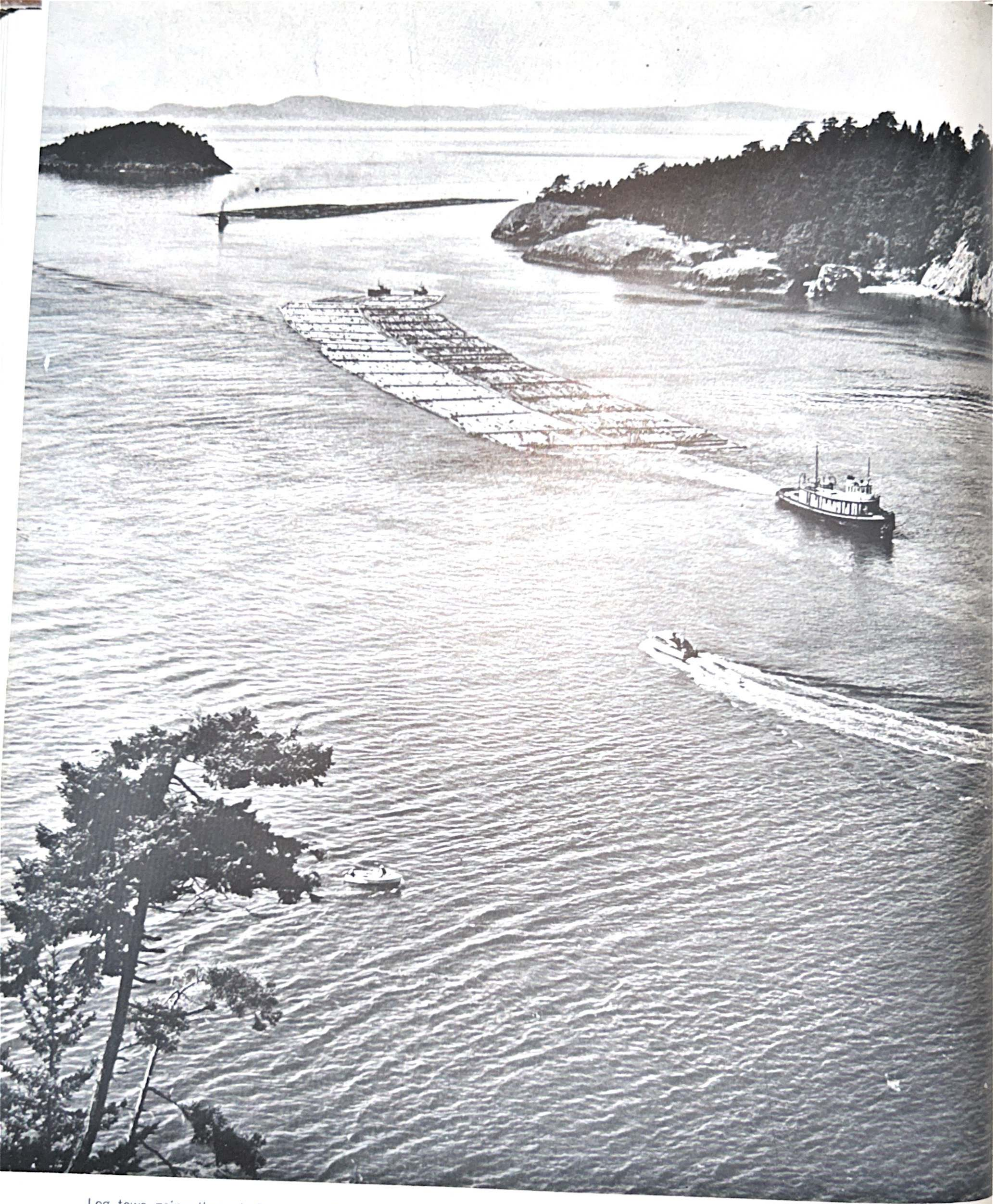
But I took up a claim in the forest  
And set myself down to hard toil;  
For two years I grubbed and I niggered  
Yet I never got down to the soil.

Then I tried to get out of the country  
But poverty forced me to stay  
Until I became an old settler  
When nothing could drive me away.

And now I am used to the country  
I think if man ever found  
A place to live and be happy  
That place is called Puget Sound.

No longer the slave of ambition  
I laugh at the world and its shams  
When I think of my happy condition  
Surrounded by acres of clams.





Log tows going through Deception Pass on their way to the mills at Anacortes. The currents and whirlpools of the Pass and the rougher water outside could break up

the booms and scatter the logs. Tugs at the rear helped prevent this.

Photograph from Bob and Ira Spring

Jug Bros (Buy me the Base) in Young's Cove  
 138  
 ed into the Star, or to corner  
 The 2 tail boat case in near Scupper



## Chapter VII

### THE PEOPLE

The population of Skagit County nearly quadrupled between 1890 and 1920, going from 8,730 to 33,388. Who were all these people and where did they come from?

The census figures for 1890 did not include Indians. The original inhabitants of the county were 11 tribes and bands of Indians. They reached perhaps their lowest point in morale and physical well-being during the 1890 to 1920 period with only a few hopeful signs for the future. In 1890 there was a smallpox epidemic among them which spread havoc. The County Commissioners hired men to go to the camps and settlements to bury the dead and burn the infected houses, in the process wiping out much of what remained of the old Indian culture. Increasingly the remnants of the tribes were being gathered on the Swinomish Reservation where poverty was extreme and tuberculosis was rampant. Some Indians retreated up the valley of the Sauk River and then farther up the Suiattle as white surveyors were followed by settlers who homesteaded the land over which the tribes customarily roamed. When finally the Indians obtained allotments of surveyed land on the Suiattle the whole territory was taken over as a National Forest, leaving them landless and homeless.

In 1894 the Bureau of Indian Affairs finally opened a four-grade elementary school on the Swinomish Reservation, 39 years after promising education as one of the compensations for the cession of Indian lands. It was a tardy and half-hearted gesture but it offered the tiny opening which was needed for the appearance of a generation of sophisticated Indian leaders after the 1920s, leadership exemplified by Martin J. Sampson, Tandy Wilbur Senior, and others. Government policy discouraged Indian leadership until the New Deal, trying unsuccessfully to transform Indians into imitations of the white farmers. It seemed in 1920 that the race would soon die out.

The early white settlers who were counted in

the 1890 census came from many regions and backgrounds. We have a great deal of information about approximately 450 men, women, and families who paid to get their biographies in the monumental *HISTORY OF SKAGIT AND SNOHOMISH COUNTIES*, published in 1906. (The charge was the only way to finance this ambitious and invaluable work, but it was a method with which a great many people refused to cooperate.) The biographies report that about 55 per cent had been born in other parts of the United States, almost all of them in the northern tier of states which stretches from New England across New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. A number were from Missouri, a very few from the South, and some from Oregon and California, children of earlier western migrants. Whether this same proportion would have held for those whose stories are not told in the *HISTORY* it is impossible to say with certainty, but the patterns of migration in the United States have consistently followed these routes from east to west.

These were the proportions for 1905; whether they had changed significantly since 1890 we cannot say, but it is clear that there were enough Yankee settlers to set the tone for the country. This is demonstrated by the emphasis on public schools in every community. It also shows in the architecture of the homes of those who could build with sawed lumber, houses with generous porches which have little function in our Washington climate, front doors with fan lights, and eaves and porches with fretwork decorations.

The same set of 1905 biographies shows 18 1/2 per cent born in the Scandinavian countries and 26 1/2 per cent from Canada and European states, among them England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Germany, and Luxembourg. Those pioneers with French names, like Charles Villeneuve, usually came from French Canada, either Quebec or Ontario.





The James Callahan family of Fredonia in 1889. Front row, l to r: Ann Olive, Margaret Teresa. Second row: Albert, Hattie (later married Ovenell), Mrs. Callahan, Mr. Callahan, Jim, Ed. Back row: John, Hannorah (later married Eyre), Richard.  
*Picture from Albert R. Ovenell*

Indians at Rockport about 1907. 1, Willie Price; 2, Lyman Martin; 3, Billie Martin; 4, Jennie Joby; 5, Louise Enick; 6, Mabel Joby; 7, Lyman Martin's daughter; 8, Howie Tom; 9, Lottie Tom; 10, Sr. Stebbs; 11, Betsy Tololby; 12, Capt. (Black) Moses; 13, Joby All; 14, Mrs. Joby All;

15, Jim Brown; 16, Big Mouth Jack; 17, Josie Tom; 18, Tommie Joby; 19, Billie Moses; 20, Joe Jack; 21, John Enick; 22, Chas. Moses-Suiattle; 23, Andrew Brown; 24, Chas. Snooks; 25, Leo Brown.  
*From Skagit County Historical Museum*







The Halpin homestead at the northwest end of Pass Lake on Fidalgo Island. Mr. Halpin walked every day from his home to his store at Old Deception (now Dewey). This is the site of the E. C. Heilman home today.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

Part of the growth of population after 1890 was the result of natural increase. Many families were large but this was partially offset by high death rates, especially from childhood diseases, though pneumonia and tuberculosis took their toll in all age groups. One page in an Anacortes cemetery register shows 25 interments between 1903 and 1920 and lists the following causes of death: consumption, 5; pneumonia, bronchitis, influenza, 5; paralysis, hemorrhage, 4; asthma, 1; "catarrh of the stomach" (an infant), 1; cirrhosis of the liver, 1; falling off wagon, 1; insanity, 1; heart failure, 1; old age, 1; killed by automobile (7 years old), 1. The cause of death for several infants was "unknown." Six of the 25 who died were under 10 years old. This sample is too small to be of any statistical significance but it does give a glimpse of everyday realities of the time.

While a great many old families stayed and their children grew up and married in the county, others moved on and many newcomers arrived. Improvements in transportation made population movements much easier in all directions. Not all who came in any one period liked what they found well enough to stay; prospectors and miners especially were drawn ever onward by mineral discoveries in Alaska, British Columbia, and the mountains of Idaho and Montana. The new arrivals who decided to remain permanently wrote back, as earlier settlers had done before them, to relatives and friends they had left behind; thus each satisfied settler became a magnet which drew others from the same region. Maine, New Brunswick, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Carolina contributed woodsmen with logging and milling experience. Many would-be farmers came from Kansas and other prairie states, preferring too much rain to the bitter winters and searing summers of the

Great Plains. Seamen and fishermen were drawn by the possibilities of Puget Sound. Eastern bankers and financiers sent their agents to seek out profitable investments.

From 1890 to World War I was the peak period for immigration from Europe into the United States, especially after 1900 for immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Most of these newcomers stopped in the industrial cities of the east and the middle west — New York, Pittsburgh, Gary, Chicago, Cleveland — but an interesting range of them reached Skagit County, attracted by opportunities which matched their experience in logging and milling, dairying, agriculture, mining, and fishing.

The Scandinavians had begun to come in the earliest days of settlement. Whether or not Magnus Anderson was the first Swede, he soon had many compatriots, clearing land, working in the woods and mills, building, fishing, trading, farming. The history of LaConner and the Skagit flats refers often to such families as the Chilbergs, Conrads, Polsons, Rudenes, Wingrens, and the many Olsons and Andersons. Among the biographies in the HISTORY about 12 per cent state that the subject was born in Sweden. Many of the families were related in the old country and they formed new alliances with each other in Skagit County to such an extent that outsiders felt that everyone was a cousin or an in-law of everyone else.

An interesting Swedish community was (and still is) Hoogdal, north of Sedro Woolley. The pioneers of this group learned about cheap logged-off land when they visited the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909. The first group of families came together from Canada where they had been living and hewed homes out of the wilderness left behind by the loggers, building their own houses and their own roads while they cleared the land and earned a living by working in the camps and mills. Another Swedish group

William Henry Halpin's store at Old Deception, later named Fidalgo City and still later Dewey.  
*Picture from the Wallie Funk collection*







The Timothy Mangan home on Guemes, the second house built by the family. Here Mrs. Mangan, an industrious pioneer widow, raised her large family, the members of which played an important part in Puget Sound development.

Picture from Wallie Funk collection

settled on Fidalgo Island along the north shore of Lake Campbell below the impressive rocky mass of Mount Erie.

The Norwegians began to come as early as the Swedes but for a long time the two communities mixed very little. In the old country Sweden had ruled Norway for many years over the objections of the Norwegians and did not grant them independence until 1905. The ancient grudges lasted for a generation in the new country, probably accentuated by the fact that local neighbors, oblivious of such emotional issues, did not distinguish readily between the two nationalities. There were two main centers of Norwegian settlement, "little Norway" near Edison and the Cedardale-Fir-Conway area.

Ole N. Lee and Peter Egtvet were among the first Norwegians to settle Cedardale, coming in 1876, actually among the earliest pioneers in that part of the country. Many others followed them. Among those whose biographies were included in the HISTORY were Ole Borseth, Andrew Crogstad, Lewis Johnson, Ole Lonke, Christopher Olsen, Gust Pearson, and Nils Donaldson. Conway celebrated Norwegian Independence Day every year on May 17.

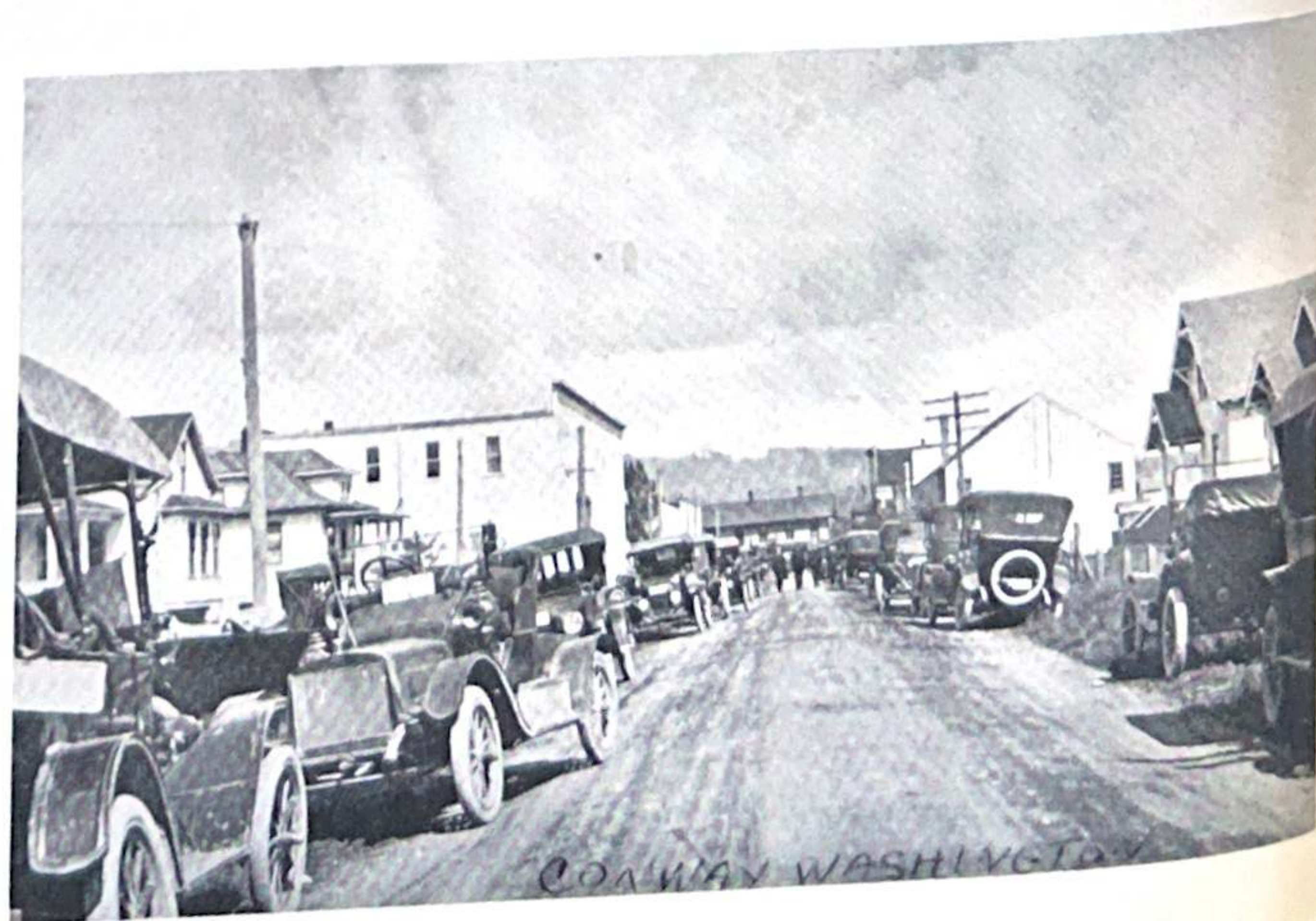
The Swedes and the Norwegians each built their own churches, and each conducted the service in their own language for a very long time. The American-educated children, many of whom had refused to learn the old tongue, finally dictated the use of English and economic forces made the maintenance of separate Lutheran, Methodist, and Bap-

tist churches unrealistic. The chief influence keeping national separation for so long was kinship; the later comers were related in some way to those who arrived first: relatives, friends, or friends of friends. The cohesion of groups was being constantly undermined by the mingling of children in the public schools and the many contacts of all age groups in the community.

The Danes who came were not so numerous as the other Scandinavians. Perhaps for this reason, perhaps because they were not emotionally involved in the question of Norwegian independence, they did not build separate churches and they very quickly identified with cross-section community groups which were working on the same issues in dairying and business that concerned them. Many of the Danes retained strong family ties, however, The descendants of Jess Knutzen

Norwegian Independence Day on May 17 was celebrated annually in Conway from 1905 onward for many years. This particular gathering was about 1915.

From: Owen Tronsdal collection





Finn Settlement in 1905. Matt and Marie Elizabeth Kittila with daughter Ida and son Elmer.

From  
Edwin A. Kittila



who arrived with his family in 1891 still hold annual reunions of the clan, attended by more than 200 people.

The Finns were the smallest of the Scandinavian groups in the county. The first five families arrived in 1891 and took up timber claims in the deep woods several miles northeast of McMurray, bringing in all their possessions on pack horses or on their own backs over a difficult trail. Other families joined the original five till there were eventually 13: John and Martha Sumners, Matt and Maria Elizabeth Kittila, John and Edla Koski, Albert and Lizzie Hendrickson, Albert and Sandra Lombolo, Isaac and Mary Waglund, Victor and Ordilla Uitto, Elias and Mardo Lahti, Mike and

Alma Hill, Matt and Hilja Latva, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Granstrom, Mr. and Mrs. Matt Haurunen, and Matt Maki.

They were skilled woodworkers who built their houses of split cedar and supported themselves by such jobs as getting out shingle bolts, sending them down flumes along Pilchuck Creek to a shingle mill at Pilchuck or hauling them to Ehrlich as soon as there was a road. The Finns made and used the first skis in the county and manufactured ice skates by shaping the runners from the steel of old crosscut saws. In 1895 they built a road to McMurray, the county paying them for their labor. Later they built a road to Lake Cavanaugh. After 1913 the logging railroad of

Finn Settlement home of Isaac Waglund about 1915. People, l to r: Elmer Berry, unidentified friend, Mrs. Mary Waglund, Mr. Lindbloom. Note the homemade swing and the house built of split cedar manufactured on the spot.

From  
Edwin A. Kittila





Parker Bell Lumber Company connected them with the main line and with the mills; after that the men could have steady work and still live at home.

The community was unified by its isolation and language, by having a school of its own, and by its habits and customs. Winter sports, especially ice skating, were family affairs. They had a big, log dance hall where they danced the polka, mazurka, schottische, and waltz to the music of a two-button accordion. Each home had its sauna. All the families were Lutherans but had no church; instead, a Lutheran minister would come on invitation twice a year to stay in homes for a week or two of religious education, confirmations, and christenings. As the outside world impinged more and more on the Finn settlement some members moved away and people who were not Finns bought their homes. The group gradually lost its cohesion but remains a warm memory to all who had any connection with it, however remote.

The opportunity to make a living from the sea drew groups from other areas. After 1890 fishermen came to Anacortes from most of the fishing countries of the world but especially from the northern Adriatic. At this time the ancient Austrian Empire was tottering toward the collapse which came at the close of World War I, torn to pieces by the rebellious minorities which composed it. Emperor Francis Joseph had given some rights

to the Hungarians in its polyglot population, making it the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but the Slavic and Italian speaking subjects were clamoring for recognition and instead were meeting with repression. Croats, Slovenians, Bosnians, other Slavic groups, and Italians from the fishing villages and islands along the Adriatic coast emigrated and some of them found their way to Anacortes where the older residents lumped them together as "Austrians." Greeks and Bulgarians, too, made their escape from the turmoil of the Balkan Wars and when one reached Anacortes others followed him.

The pioneer for the Croatian group was Ivan (John) Babarovich who left the Adriatic island of Brach for America in 1879. His family lost track of him for many years but learned by chance that he was in Seattle. His brothers, Peter and Spiro with their families, joined him in 1902 and they all homesteaded on Sinclair Island. After a few years they moved to Anacortes for the sake of their children. The men became commercial fishermen, using small boats with room only for their nets and fish. During fishing season they lived in camps on the beach where the women of the family cooked for them. In 1910 John Babarovich built a larger boat, "Uncle John," with facilities for eating and sleeping; this made the fishing more flexible.

News of the good fishing at Anacortes reached the Croatian communities in the east in the early

Purse seiners from Anacortes in camp at Griffin's Bay on San Juan Island in 1901. The men lived in tents and

tended fish traps as well as fishing from boats with purse seines.  
*From the collection of Wallie Funk*





1900s when times were hard and the men of the sea were finding industrial jobs uncongenial. Rudolph Franulovich from the island of Korchula had reached New Jersey in 1907 and married Kata Suryan in 1910; soon after, they came to Anacortes. Others followed with names such as Prizmich, Gugich, Andrich, Suryan, Bozanich, Dragovich, Barcott, Vlacich. They worked hard, raised gardens, kept domestic animals, fished for a cash income, lived frugally, educated their children, and have prospered. Most of these family names and others of Croatian origin are still to be found in Anacortes. The Croatian community in the 1970s celebrates its festivals and maintains a great deal of unity.

The Chinese in Anacortes were in a different category. They were imported by the fish canneries to dress the salmon, pack the cans, and solder on the lids. They were single men who lived in dormitories, wore long queues, spoke little English, and stayed only as their services were required. When machinery, "the iron Chink," began performing the cannery tasks which had been their specialty the Anacortes Chinese disappeared into the Chinatowns of Seattle and the Canadian cities.

The mountains of North Carolina sent another interesting group to the county to fill an economic need. As logging and mills spread up the Skagit River there were more jobs in the woods than there were competent people to fill them. The early camps had been staffed by transient crews made up of Indians and every kind of white man — floaters who did not like town life or very steady work, adventurers, misfits, fugitives, hard workers for whom the woods were a way of life, penniless young men working just long enough to save a stake in order to lease or buy land and begin farming. One camp manager claimed he always had three crews, one coming, one working, and one going. The increasing size and complexity of the operations needed a more stable work force. A few families from the North Carolina mountains had come before 1900 but it was after the railroad was completed to Rockport in 1901 that their relatives began arriving by train. Some came by day coach, sleeping on the straw-covered seats and eating their meals out of picnic baskets during the five- or six-day trip. Others came in immigrant trains where one or several families could live in a freight car with all their household goods and their domestic animals for the entire trip. They brought with them their hunting dogs and caged raccoons which they set free in the woods, when they arrived, to

guarantee them a familiar sport. They also brought the kind of chickens from which fighting cocks are bred.

The mills and camps welcomed them with jobs. The line of the railway from Sedro Woolley to its end at Rockport became Tarheel Land. The rugged life of a homestead in the woods, the hard work of the forests and the mills, the security of life among the members of one's clan, the freedom to maintain one's own life style without the pressure of too close neighbors — all this suited the North Carolinians and gave a special atmosphere to the upper valley after 1900.

One town along the rail line, however, had a different kind of life style and attracted a different group of newcomers. A cement plant opened at Cement City in 1905 and another at Baker soon after; the towns combined and incorporated as Concrete. The cement industry required workers who would quarry the clay and limestone and work in the dusty atmosphere of the mills in which the two were combined to make cement. This kind of labor was not congenial to the southern mountain folk. The cement plants brought in families from the south European immigration, principally Italians. As in other cases, the first few were responsible for inducing others to come.

In an entirely separate category from any of the other groups discussed above was the Socialist settlement on Bow Hill near Blanchard, Equality Colony.

The Socialist Party of the United States in the 1890s had many factions, some of which believed that the road to socialism led through the ballot box, and some that a practical demonstration was the only way to convince the public that socialism could really work. In 1895 some of the latter group in the state of Maine organized the Brotherhood of the Cooperative Commonwealth, contributing 10 cents per member per month to a fund which was to finance a socialist community. Chapters of the Brotherhood appeared in many states and the fund rapidly grew to \$10,000.

The choice of a site for the new colony was important. It had to be in a place where the opportunities for agriculture and industry were developing rapidly and where a successful demonstration could spawn other colonies and hopefully evangelize an entire state in a reasonably short time. Washington had just elected a populist governor and was believed ripe for experimentation. Ed Pelton, an experienced woodsman from Maine, quietly examined possible areas for the Brother-





Equality Colony from the northwest. The hill land of the colony has been logged off but not cleared—bottom land was more fertile and it has been cleared and fenced. In the distance is the forest on adjoining land.

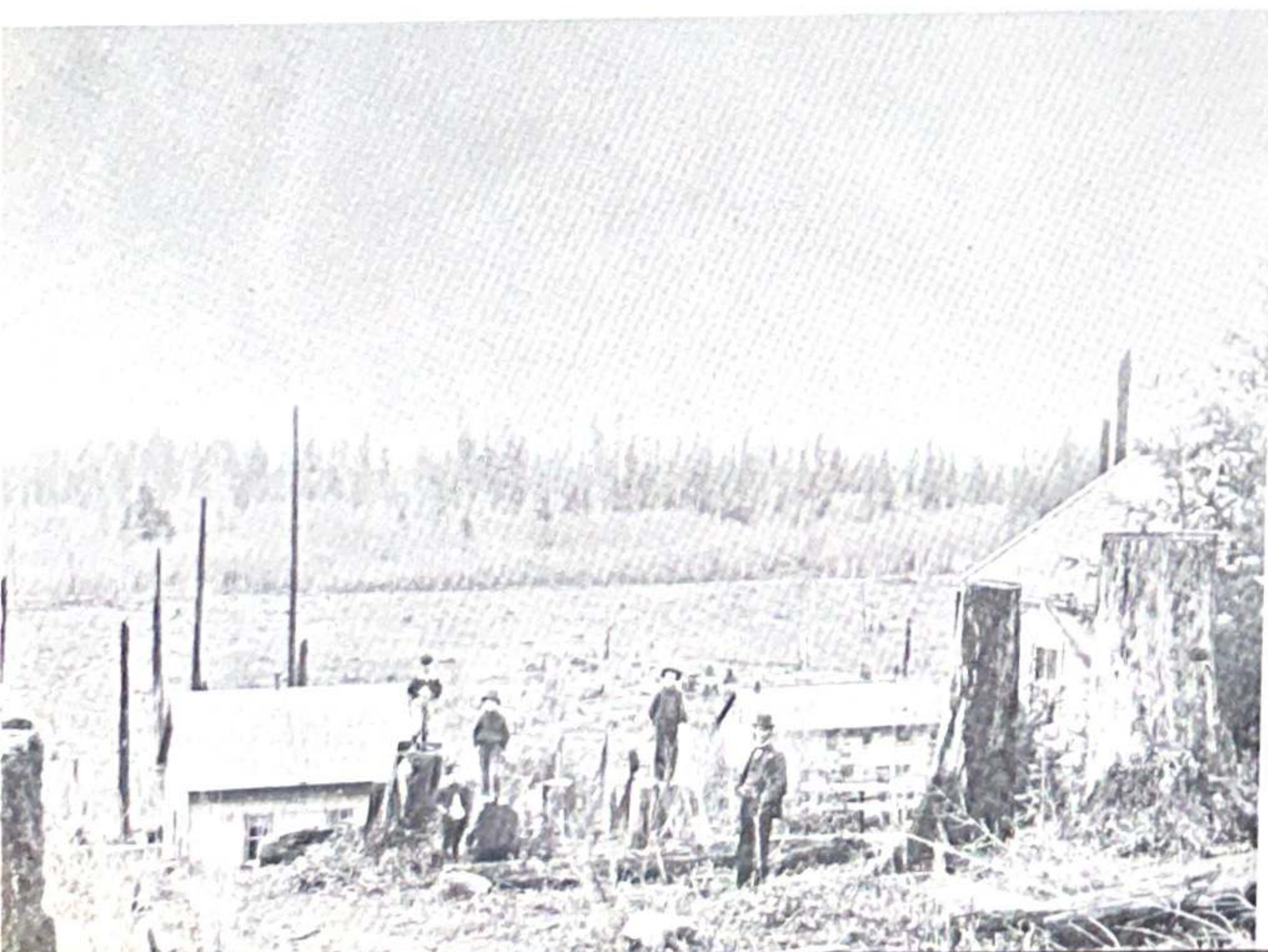
*From Anacortes Museum of History and Art*

hood and selected a site near Blanchard, a well drained hillside covered with heavy timber for the colony buildings, a creek running through the property, and rich delta land below, thick with alders. He paid \$10 an acre cash for 280 acres of land.

An advance guard of colony members arrived in 1897 to begin clearing and building. Within a year they had slashed and burned 100 acres of the alder bottom and were pulling the stumps to prepare for agriculture. They had also cleared part of the hillside and built a large apartment house for the colony members who were to follow them, a bakery, dining hall and kitchen, laundry room, a combination school house and lecture hall, and a large barn. There were also various small buildings for offices and work rooms. In 1898 they purchased another 160 acres of timber land and later added to their holdings until the commune owned about 640 acres.

Members came to Equality Colony from half

Equality Colony, looking from the hill across the "alder bottom," fertile delta land which was being cleared for agriculture while the stumps were left on the poor soil of the hillside. *From Anacortes Museum of History and Art*



Equality Colony. One of the large dormitories which furnished living quarters to the colonists. Notice the woman in the door at the end which does not yet have any porch or stairs to make it an entrance. Also notice the stovepipe thrust through the second window on the side of the building, the only indication of any heating.

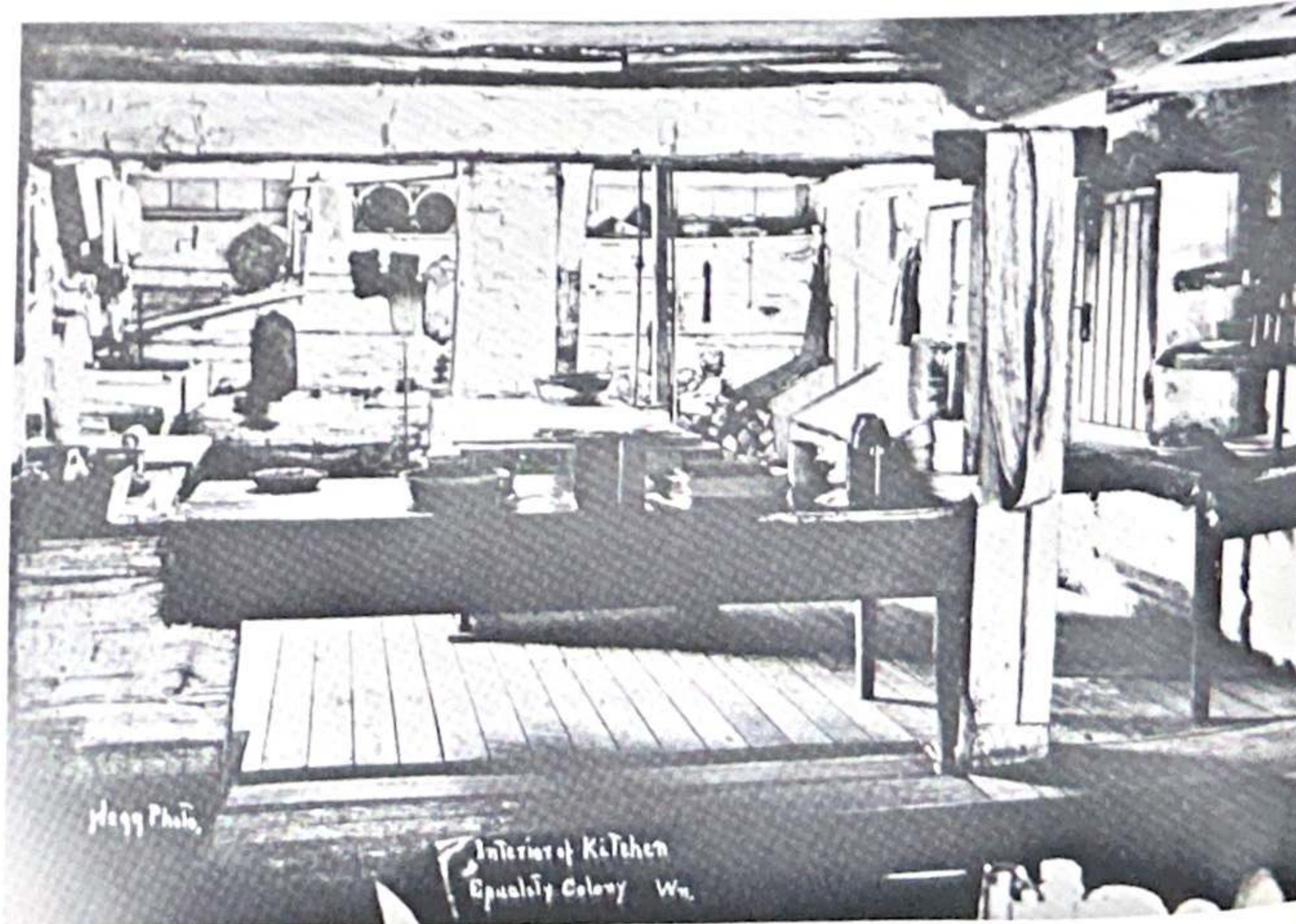
*From Anacortes Museum of History and Art*

the states in the union. Each family paid \$160 for membership, a sum which became part of the working capital of the commune. Later penniless people who could persuade the members of their sincerity were admitted on payment of \$1 and the promise to work out the balance. The members brought with them varied skills. A newspaper article of 1898 mentions printers, carpenters, professors, fishermen, farmers, mill men, etc. In 1900 the colony newspaper, *INDUSTRIAL FREEDOM*, which circulated widely in Brotherhood chapters throughout the country, advertised, "The colony is in need of a socialist tinner, blacksmith, shoe repairer, and a printer or compositor."

Every male colonist was expected to work an eight-hour day (at a time when, country-wide, men worked 10, 12, or even 14 hour days), employed so far as possible in his own field of specialization but with the understanding that he might be called upon for any task that needed doing. Those who worked for farmers or logging outfits or mills out-

Kitchen of Equality Colony. Meals were prepared here for all the colonists, the women taking their turns at cooking and other household chores.

*From the collection of Charles Easton*





# Brotherhood of the Co-operative Commonwealth.

Received March 14 1898, from Charles Herg,  
Kelso, Oregon,  
1.00 to be placed to his credit on Colony  
Membership Fee.

N. W. Leonard, National Secretary

Note: The payment of \$160.00 entitles a member to a home and employment in a B. C. C. colony.

Receipt for a down-payment on a membership in the Brotherhood.

From Charles Easton

side the colony turned in their wages to the common treasury. The women worked six hours a day and the household chores were rotated. All were paid at a uniform rate in scrip. This scrip could be used for purchases at the commissary which was kept well stocked with good quality merchandise and probably gave at least as wide a variety of items as the small general stores of the time. There were Saturday night dances and programs

of music and speeches to mark the anniversary of the founding of the colony. Adult education and recreation were considered part of living.

Because of the timber on the property a saw-mill was one of the first industries undertaken. A fishing boat was an early purchase. The colony operated its own dairy, owned its own horses, and raised food for the animals as well as the people. The fare in the communal dining room was simple

Equality Colony. Donkey engine, shingle bolts, and mill crew. They made their own building materials.

From Anacortes Museum of History and Art





but abundant and of good quality.

A socialist colony was expected to branch out into the production of a range in industrial products. By 1900 INDUSTRIAL FREEDOM was advertising, "Equality Cereal Coffee. Made from Extra Quality Grain by Equality colony members. A pure, wholesome, invigorating beverage, better than coffee and much cheaper." No record has been found of other products manufactured for sale outside the community, but the hard working, idealistic members of the colony had gone a long way toward making it self-sufficient in its first four years.

Ed Pelton was the dynamic leader but all members of both sexes over 18 years old had a vote in the community assembly which met once a week to decide policy. In such a group of free-thinking theoreticians, differences of opinion were frequent and difficult to resolve or compromise. After Pelton was killed in an accident the meetings took place more often and the discussions became bitter. Difficulties were compounded by the increasing numbers of "free loaders" who descended on the group to enjoy the good fare of the dining hall; they paid the \$1 minimum fee and absconded after loading up with everything they could get at the commissary.

Financial problems increased the acrimony of

the policy discussions. At one stage in the dissension rival factions split the colony into two separate but related groups, one of which was Freeland Colony. On February 6, 1906 the final blow fell when an arsonist, identity never determined, burned the great barn with 110 tons of hay, 20 milk cows, a dozen calves, and six horses. Only three horses were saved. A group of members petitioned the court in Mount Vernon for an order dissolving the colony and appointing a receiver to determine the disposition of its assets. Judge George A. Joiner granted the petition and appointed E. W. Ferris receiver. The lands and buildings were auctioned for cash on the courthouse steps on June 1, 1907 and sold to John J. Peth for \$12,500. Other colonists contested the court's decision and the case was in the courts for years but the Supreme Court of the state upheld the sale.

Today the only physical reminders of the experiment are the names of Colony Creek and Colony Road near Blanchard. However, many Skagit County families can trace ancestors back to the industrious, idealistic founders of the colony who have seldom been given the credit they deserved for their pioneering efforts. At least some of their radical ideas have become commonplace today, the eight-hour day, equal rights for women, the 18-year-old voting age, for example.

Group of members of Equality Colony around 1900. Notice that the small buildings are built of logs and split cedar shakes and boards but the large one is of sawed boards,

produced in their own mill from trees cut on the site.  
*From the Anacortes Museum of History and Art*





## Chapter VIII

### HOMES AND HOME LIFE

The first necessity for a settler was shelter. If he built it himself it might be a sturdy Swedish log cabin such as Magnus Anderson built or a house of split cedar boards and shakes, Indian style, such as Peter Larsen built above Sauk in 1889. He left his wife and two sons in Tacoma while he prepared a home for them on the homestead he had staked out. Many years later his wife wrote:

The way he had to build the house was to cut down the cedar trees and split them up into boards and timber. He had the nails and tools with him. . . . My Peter was a good blacksmith. Now he had to learn to be a carpenter and build a house out of a tree. He had to cook his own meals over some stones under a tree. He slept out nights. There were lots of wild animals there so he had to keep a fire all night. . . . He had to build the doors himself but he had the windows freighted up (by Indians in a canoe). In three weeks he was home again in Tacoma and told me about his house. Some of our friends thought it was wonderful; some thought it must be a barn he had built.

Probably few amateur carpenters were able to turn a tree into a house in three weeks, but most of the first houses on stump farms were small and simple, often with dirt floors like Peter Larsen's. The barns were bigger and sturdier for they were intended to last. The house would be replaced as soon as time and money permitted.

People who came out with capital hired carpenters to build good, comfortable houses of sawed lumber. When the money came in from a large oat, potato, hop, or cabbage seed crop, farmers who had been living in rude shelters hired the same skilled men to construct houses to match the size of their families and their prosperity. Around the turn of the century there was a great deal of competition among well-to-do farm families to see who would build the largest and finest home. When the new house was completed the old one became one of the farm outbuildings, perhaps a bunk house for hired hands or a chicken house.

Fire has been the chief enemy of these fine

Barn and family on Beaver Marsh Road about 1910 on the place owned in 1974 by Nellie Cornwall. Note the length of the vertical boards of which the barn is built and the fact that there are still stumps in the right background of the picture as late as 1910. The people, l to r: Sigrid Olsen (later Walker), unidentified boy, Mrs. Swan Olsen, unidentified boy, Edie Terrell, Mr. Swan Olsen.

Picture from Sigrid Olsen Walker







First house of Charles Elde, 1884-1894, rented from Dr. G. V. Calhoun with the 240 acres on which it stood. In 1894 he bought the present Tage Elde place from Dr. Calhoun. On the ground, l to r: Nels Elde, John Swanberg. Sitting on bench: Nels Anderson, Swan Lagerval. Standing on ground: Nels Swanberg. Sitting on porch: Ed Carlson, Axel Anderson. Standing on porch: Charles Elde, an unidentified housekeeper.

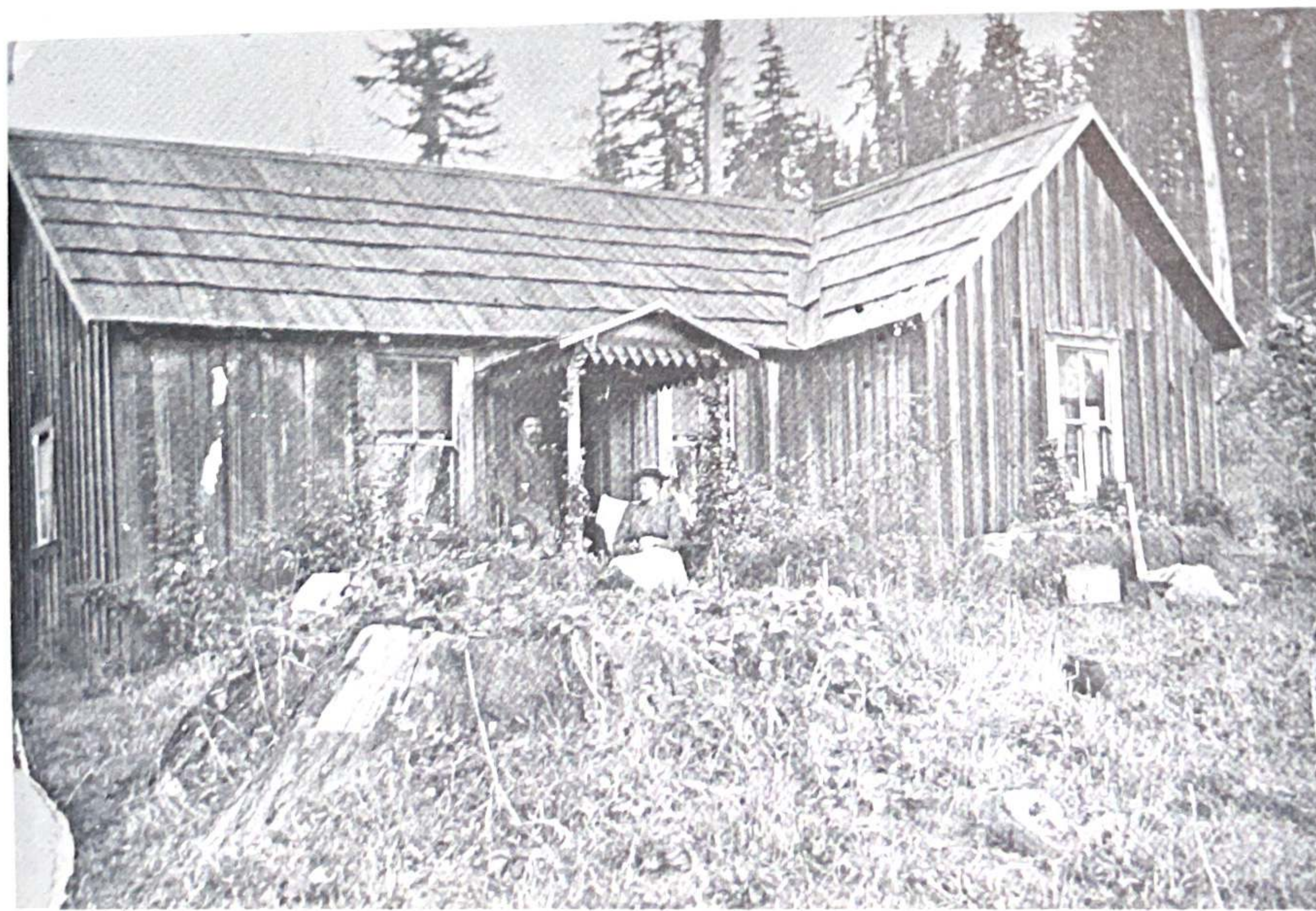
*Picture from Carl Anderson*

old homes. The Conner and Peth houses and many others were completely destroyed in the days before there was any way of fighting fires in the country. The Gaches home in LaConner was severely damaged by fire in 1972 but is being restored. Around 1910 the house of Robert Woodburn beside the railway track between Whitney Station and Swinomish Channel caught fire. The roof was burning when the Anacortes-Burlington train came by. The railroad had no fire fighting equipment but the engineer stopped the train and all the train crew and male passengers rushed to help carry out the furniture, saving much of it. Later the Woodburns rebuilt the house on the same foundation to look exactly like the one which had been destroyed. It stands there today, appearing just as it did 70 years ago.

Whether the houses were large or small, built

by skilled carpenters or constructed by amateurs, their comforts and conveniences were all limited by the conditions of the time in regard to water, heat, and electricity.

Nationwide electricity was in its infancy in 1890; the ambitious project of an electric railway the length of Fidalgo Island failed because the generators could not furnish enough power. During the next thirty years techniques improved both for generating and transmitting electricity. The steps in the process had many local variations but they can be roughly summarized as follows: (1) Local electrical companies furnished power for street lights in towns, 1890-1905. (2) Electric lighting was made available to homes within the towns during the hours of darkness, 1895-1912. (3) Electricity was available 24 hours a day after 1912 when Puget Power built the Interurban. (4) Extension



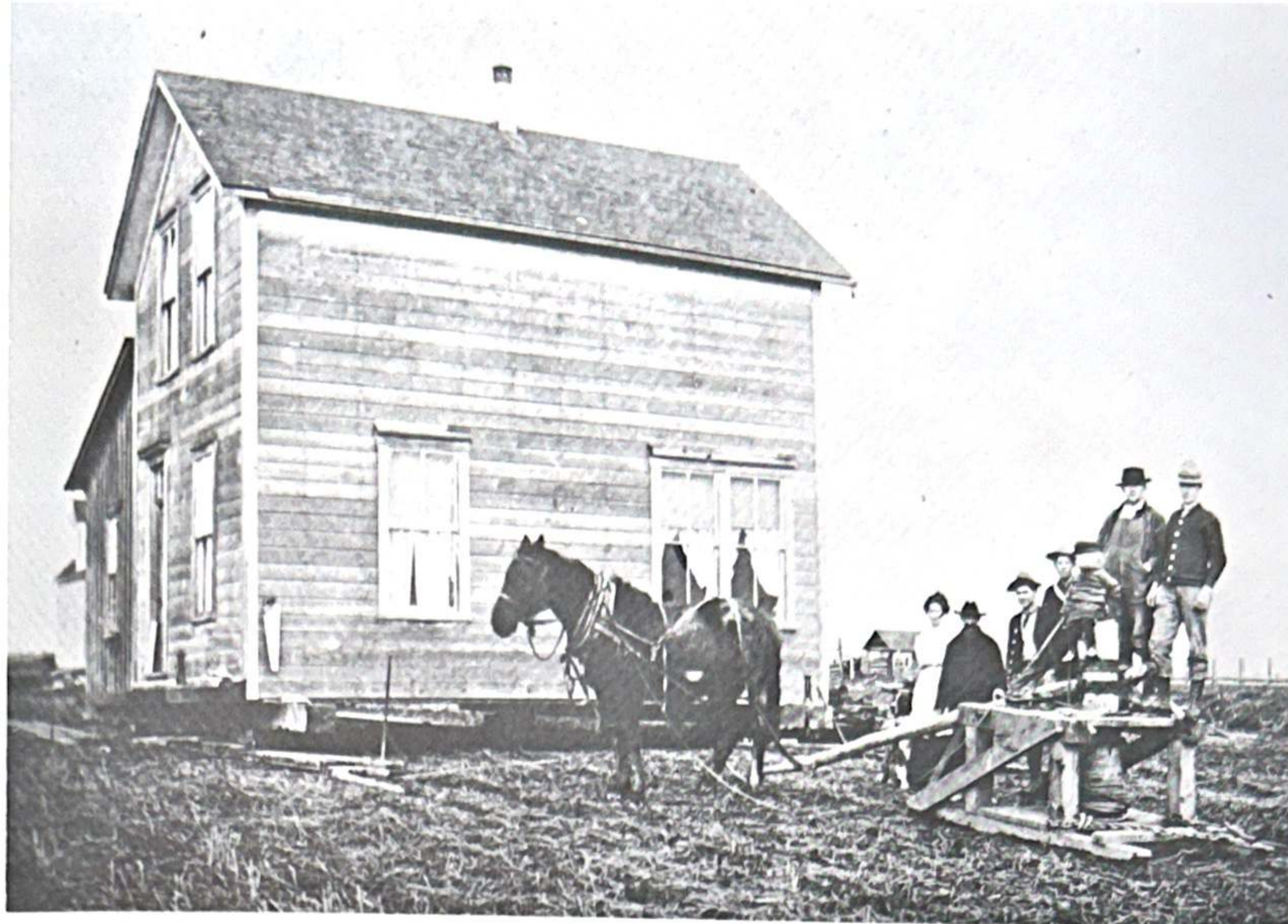
Finn Settlement. First house of Mr. and Mrs. Matt Kittila about 1896. Note the huge stump in the left foreground and the construction of the house of split cedar boards and battens.

*From Edwin A. Kittila*



Nels Larson's home, built in 1890, was moved 1/2-mile by using a stump puller powered by a horse. The house, remodeled and enlarged, is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Larson on Beaver Marsh Road.

Picture from Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Axelsson



"Maplehurst," home of Wm. J. Cornelius on N.E. side of Pleasant Ridge. The extension at the left was a large kitchen with a big wood-burning range and a long table to feed the hired hands. The bunkhouse and barn were to the north out of sight. On the edge of the hill a bell was mounted on a high post for calling the hands to meals. The people in the picture, l to r: William Wallace, Wm. J. Cornelius, the dog Carlo, Mrs. J. O. Rudene, Nellie Cornelius, John Arthur Cornelius, Mary Williams Inman, Charles W. "Neap" Cornelius, Mrs. W. J. Cornelius, Phil A. Cornelius, unidentified.

From  
Betty Cornelius Bowen

Finn Settlement. Second home of the Matt Kittila family, built in 1915 and still in good condition in 1974. L to r: Matt Kittila, Ed, Elmer, Ethel, Mrs. Kittila, Ida, Mrs. Pierson (daughter of John and Martha Sumner, the first Finn settlers), Mr. Pierson, and their son, Ford. Picture taken about 1917.

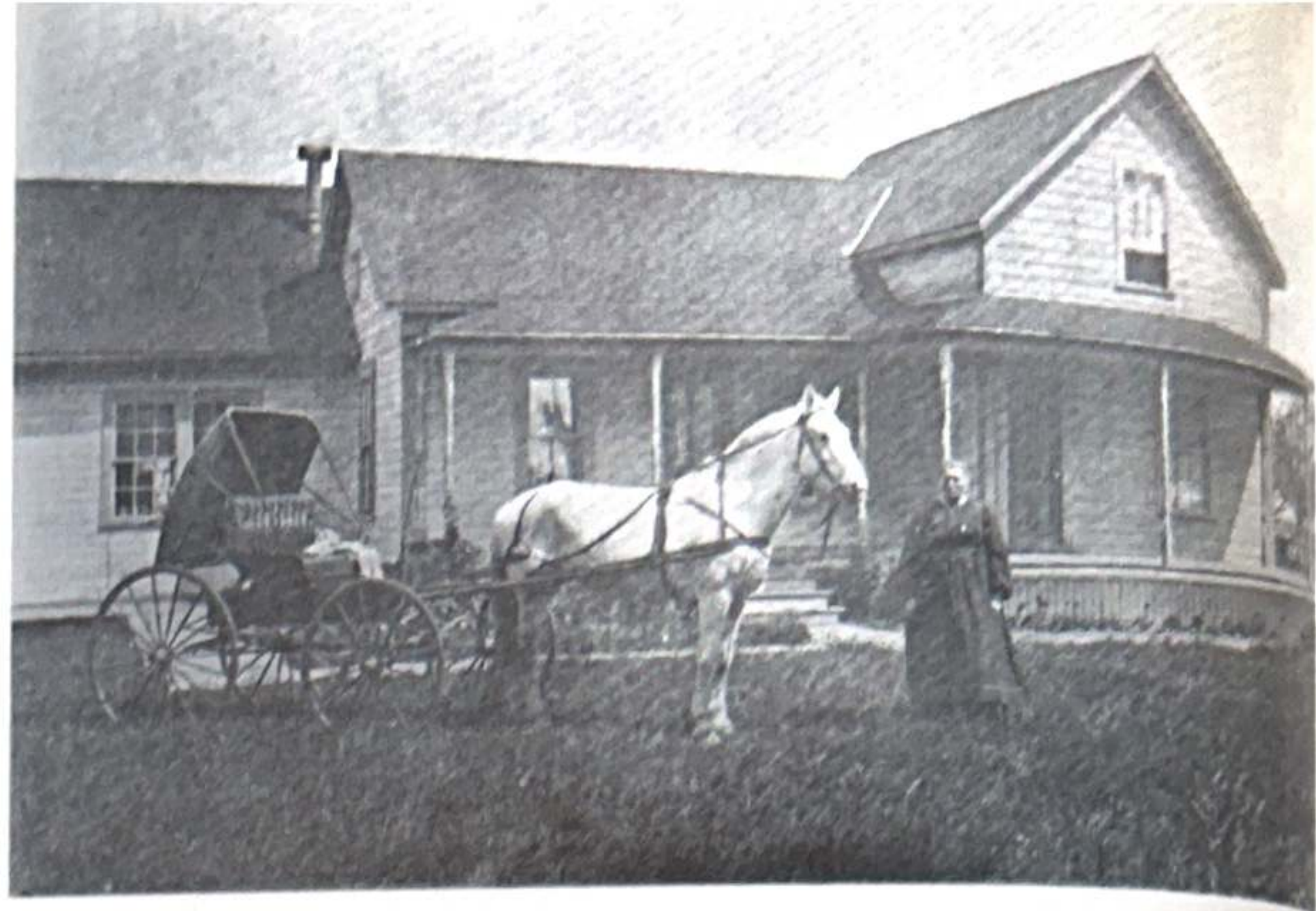
From Edwin A. Kittila







T. B. Childs' home at 8th and G, built in 1892.  
From the collection of Wallie Funk



Edison, 1900. Kate Schumaker with horse and buggy.  
From Bertha Schumaker



Fred and Abi Abbey's home in Lookout (Alger).  
From the Abbey family



The Abbey family on the porch of their Lookout (Alger) home in 1902. L to r: Cressa, Fred, Mason, Prudence, Abi, Fannie.

From the Abbey family

Mount Vernon home of Washington State Governor Henry McBride in 1902.

Reproduced for the Ronald Holtum collection from Sebring's SKAGIT COUNTY ILLUSTRATED, 1903



of transmission to country districts, first those immediately adjacent to towns, then those farther away, beginning around 1910 but not completed by 1920. In 1920 the county was on the verge of becoming a hydroelectric generating center through the projected dams on the Baker and upper Skagit Rivers. Small local companies had almost all been absorbed into a power grid.

Towns began installing water systems in 1890-1900, sometimes bringing water from mountain streams as Edison and Sedro Woolley did. Mount Vernon used springs at the foot of Lincoln Hill for a time and Anacortes piped its water from Heart Lake. People who lived along the river often pumped directly from the Skagit though both Mount Vernon and Sedro Woolley ran their untreated sewage into the stream. The George Johnstons, living on the west bank of the Skagit just below the Mount Vernon bridge, furnished water to West Mount Vernon from a high tank, kept filled by a windmill which pumped from the river. When the "new" Washington school was built on McLean Road in 1909 the town extended its water lines under the river and had flush toilets in the building though the brick Lincoln School on the hill continued to use outdoor toilets till well after 1910. Some people in the upper valley arranged

Matt Bessner home about 1900. People, l to r: Unidentified, Matt Bessner, Mrs. Matt Bessner, unidentified, John Bessner, Mary Bessner.

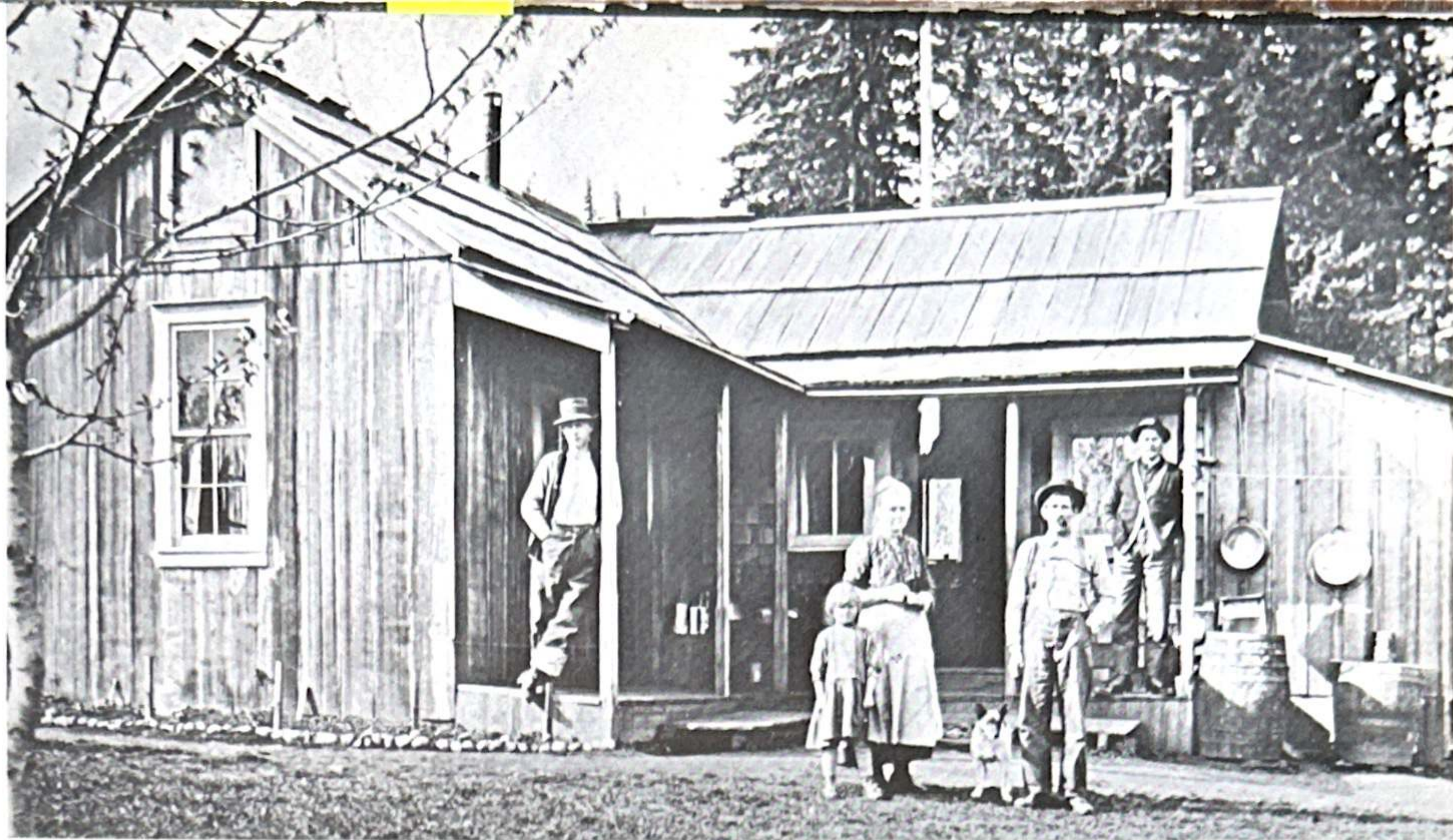
Picture from Mildred Bessner O'Brien





Finn Settlement. The Uitto home about 1915. L to r: Isaac Uitto, Sarah, Mrs. Ordilla Uitto, Victor Uitto, and on the porch William Maki, a cousin. Notice the rain barrel for soft water, also the wash tub and the rubbing board.

*From Edwin A. Kittila*



their own systems of running water by piping from mountain streams into their homes; these systems worked splendidly except when bitter weather froze them solid.

The vast majority of country people depended on wells, a few of them dug wells from which water was raised with a well-sweep and a bucket, but most of them had driven wells from which the water was raised by a pitcher pump, a suction device worked by a handle. Pumping water for the house and stock was a regular chore and a heavy one. Moving the pump handle up and down would not create any suction unless there was water above the plunger, so a full bucket was kept nearby for priming the pump. ("Priming the pump" is a metaphor which has passed into the language and is used by many who have never seen a pitcher pump.) On a freezing winter morning the water around the plunger would be frozen and boiling water was needed to melt the ice and free it. Over most of the valley the ground water contains a great deal of iron, enough to stain white clothes



Cupples Ranch up the Baker River from Concrete. This is the new house which was built after the original homestead house was burned.

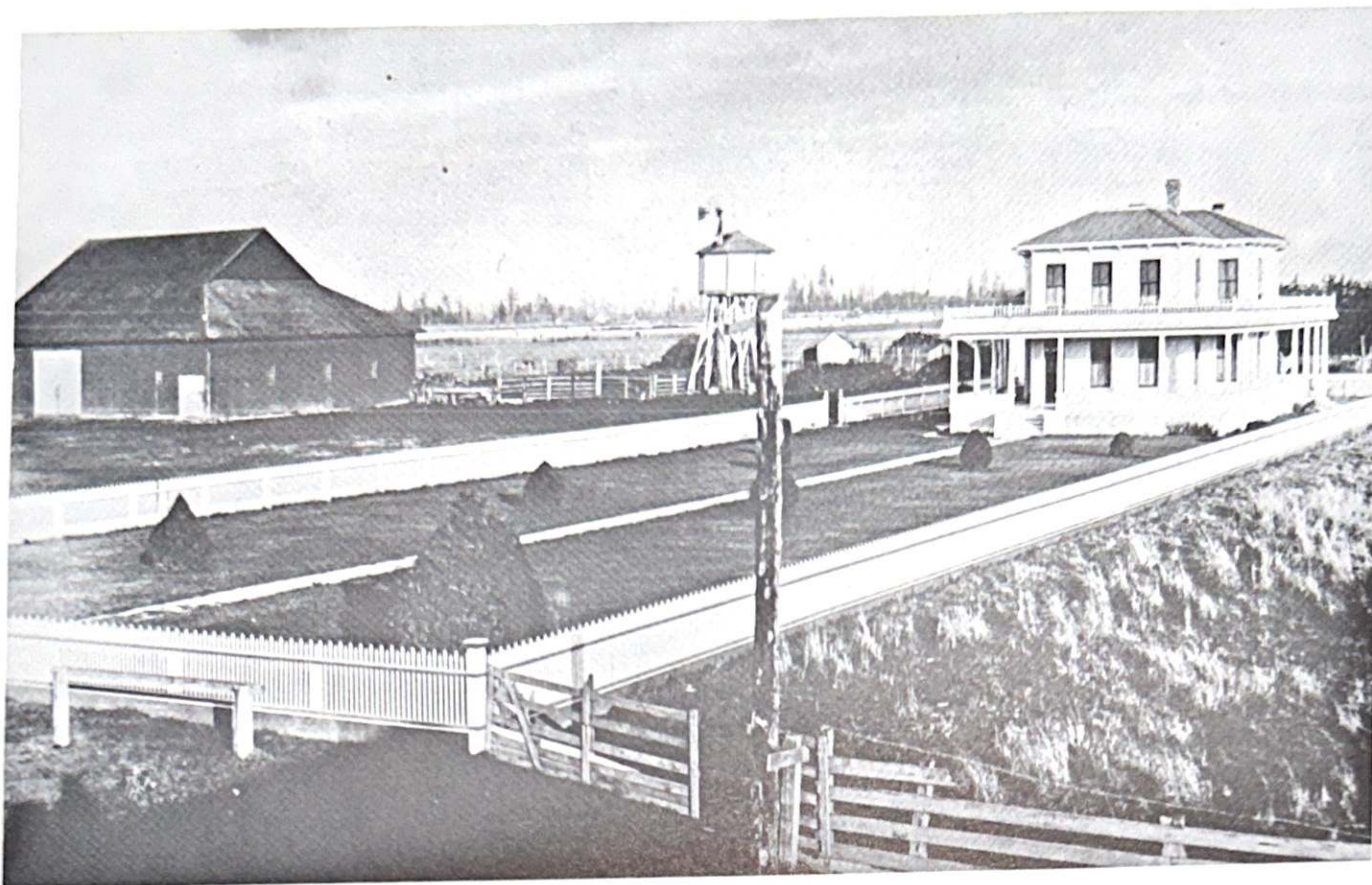
*Picture from Angele Howe Cupples*

Pleasant Ridge home of James O'Loughlin family about 1906.

*Skagit County Historical Museum*







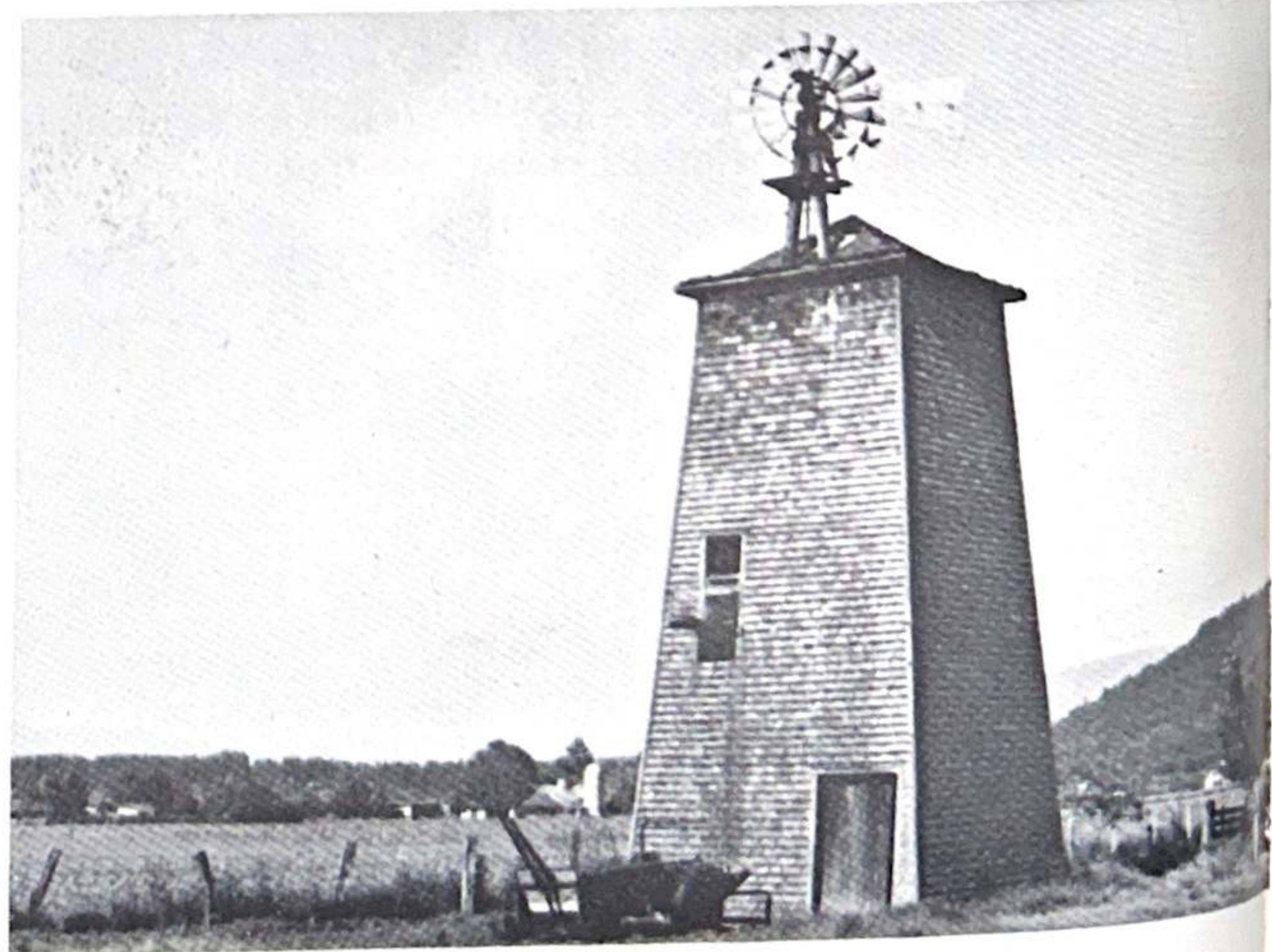
The Richard Peth house near La Conner, built in 1909. The windmill pumped water from the well into the elevated water tank so that both house and barn had running water. The picket fence marked off the yard area from the fields so that closing the gate would keep out cattle. In the left foreground is a place to tie the horses of visitors.  
Picture from Hazel Peth

and the enamel of sinks and toilet fixtures. Water softeners were not yet on the market but a filter barrel filled with sand and charcoal would remove much of the iron. Women tried to wash clothes either in filtered water or in rain water, caught in rain barrels under the downspouts from the eaves. For drinking water country schools had a pump in the yard and a water bucket inside the school with a drinking cup hanging on the side. It was 1911 before the State Federation of Women's Clubs listed the abolition of the public drinking cup as one of its objectives, the first organized attack on an ancient practice. As long as there was no running water it was impossible to have indoor flush toilets. Schools and homes, even in the towns, had backyard outhouses for longer than seems credible today. Prosperous farmers built elevated water tanks into which windmills pumped well water; later the same tanks would be filled, using a small gasoline motor to do the pumping. By 1920 there were a great many water systems, public and private, functioning in the county and many houses had indoor plumbing, but the pitcher pump and the outhouse still remained.

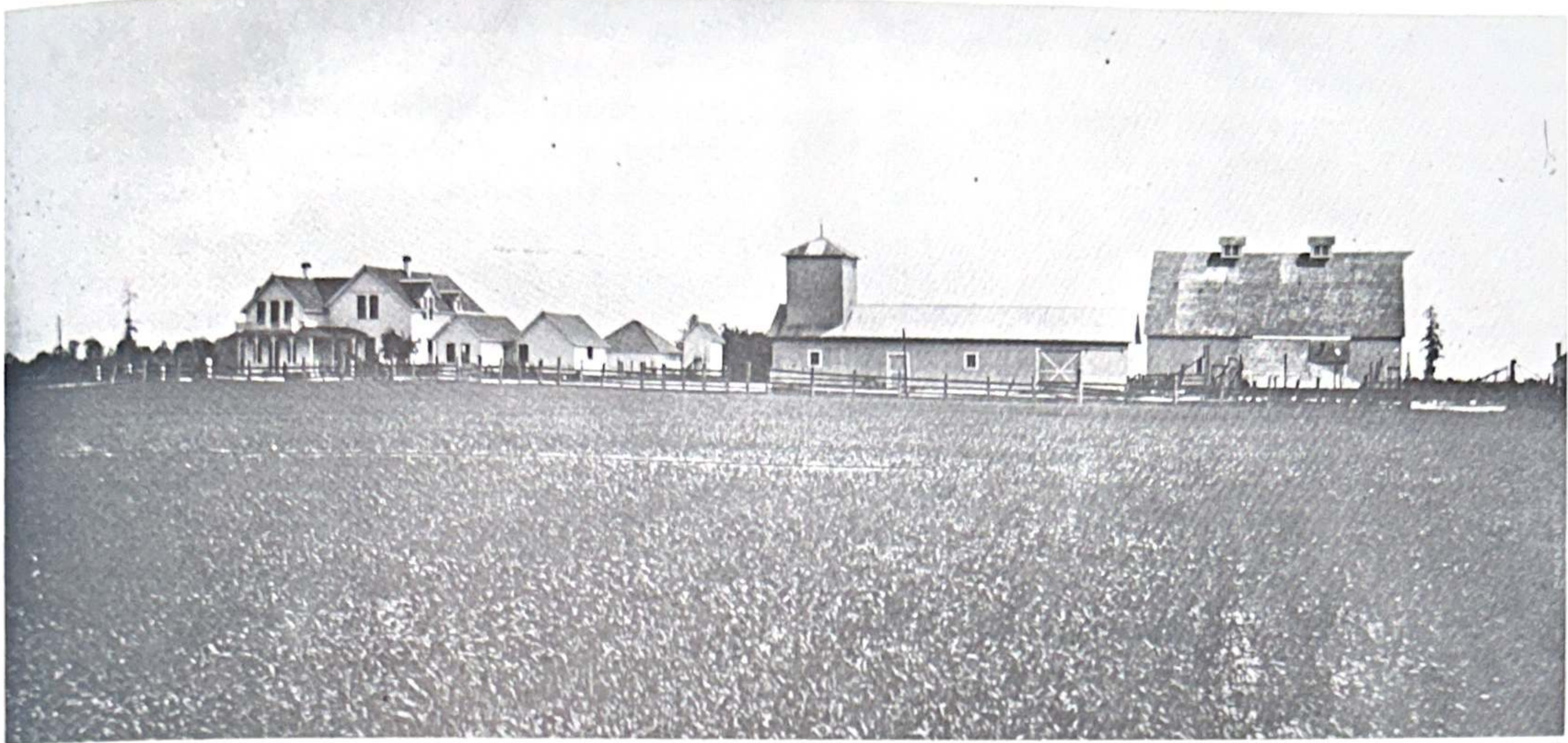
The kitchens throughout this period were large, frequently serving as the family dining room as well. The wood-burning kitchen range not only cooked the food, but before there was running water it also heated the water for washing the dishes and for all the other washing needs. The wash basin for hands and face was either in the

kitchen or just outside. The man of the house shaved in the kitchen, stropping his long razor on a leather strap which could also serve to discipline the unruly in the woodshed. On Saturday night the whole family bathed in the washtub on the kitchen floor by the stove, children first. Their hair, backs, feet, and ears got a careful scrubbing and inspection; after a week of wash basin ablutions they needed it.

One of the last windmills in Skagit County with its water tower, still in operating condition, though no longer used. This stands on the Dike Road south of Mount Vernon.  
From Margaret Willis







1920 farm on Skagit delta showing the many specialized farm buildings: 1, main dwelling; 2, room for cooling milk and storing canned fruit; 3, laundry room and woodshed; 4, building for Delco light engine and for keeping apples in winter; 5, smoke house; 6, pump house, tools,

and garage; 7, barn; 8, chicken house; 9, repair shop. (Chicken house and repair shop are in front of the barn. At the far right a corner of the bunkhouse can be seen.)

*Picture from Mildred Bessner O'Brien*

Traditionally Monday was wash day, but whether it was regularly scheduled or not, the family wash took over the entire kitchen while it was going on. White cottons and linens were then scrubbed by hand on a corrugated rubbing board, wrung out between the rollers of a hand-operated wringer into the rinse water, and returned through the wringer after rinsing. The

hems of long skirts picked up a great deal of dirt, especially on dusty or muddy streets. The detachable white collars and cuffs of men's shirts had to be spotless, and the shirts themselves which had been worn for several days took a good deal of rubbing. The aprons which little girls wore to school were likely to have dandelion or berry stains which had to be treated before washing. The

A summer wash day at Avon in 1902. George L. Erickson's mother in the doorway, Fred Johnson outside. The two tubs, the scrubbing board in the closer one and the hand-turned wringer to move the wash to the next one but return the soapy water to the first, the screws on top

of the wringer to adjust the pressure between the rollers, and finally the straw laundry basket to carry the wet washing to the clothes line—all familiar to the pre-washing machine generation. *Picture from collection of Skagit County Historical Museum*





clothes of the boys were unpredictable but a challenge to the women doing the washing. There were early washing machines which consisted of a tub with agitators operated by hand but they were inadequate for dealing with most of the family wash.

Some exemplary housewives got up hours before the other members of the family on wash day and had the laundry on the line before breakfast. In some neighborhoods women watched and gossiped about the degree of whiteness displayed on the line. Washing was an operation which required strength, skill, and experience. A few women took in washing for a living, calling for the basket of soiled clothes and returning them later clean, starched, and ironed. Other washerwomen went from house to house by the day. These women were highly valued by those who could afford them but were poorly paid. Most women either did all their own laundry or at least helped their helpers. The whole town of Mount Vernon laughed heartily when the "green" maid of one of the few families who kept a full-time servant was found washing the baby's diapers in the dishpan. Steam laundries were available but most housewives felt that they were too hard on clothes and too expensive; diaper services had not yet been thought of.

The clothes were ironed with sad irons, heated on the kitchen stove. The women ironing had to stand between the hot stove and the ironing board in order to return a too-cool iron to the stove and pick up a hotter one at frequent intervals. Electric irons which appeared about 1915 made the job far easier.

The range, of course, heated the kitchen. Other rooms in the house were heated by wood-burning, pot-bellied iron stoves. Bedrooms were usually unheated. People who loved an open fire enjoyed fireplaces but they were seldom used as a major source of heat. The first central heating with hand-fired coal furnaces and steam radiators began appearing around 1910, especially in new homes.

Brooms, mops and scrub brushes were still the main tools for cleaning the floors but for the rugs there was a wonderful new invention in the 1890s called a carpet sweeper whose rotating brush picked up dust and lint when it was pushed back and forth over the rugs and threw it into a compartment inside the machine. The deep-down dust which it could not reach had to wait for spring housecleaning when the carpets were hung on the

clothes line out of doors and beaten with rug-beaters till the cloud of dust diminished to a satisfactory extent. The earliest vacuum cleaners appeared about 1910; the vacuum was created by a child pumping a lever on a stationery cylinder while mother ran the nozzle over the rugs. It was nearly 1920 before the first electric vacuum cleaners came on the market.

Kerosene lamps lighted the large majority of homes until 1910 to 1920. There were lanterns for use outdoors, on carriages, and in the barn, small lamps to carry from room to room and to the bedroom at night, parlor lamps with colored bases and fancy shades for the homes which had parlors, and the large lamp for the evening gatherings of the family. It shed a circle of light on the dining table after the evening meal had been cleared away; the family gathered around it during long winter evenings, the children with their homework, the mother with her mending, the father reading a farm journal or newspaper. Family card games like *Flinch* or *Authors* might be played within the lighted circle. Sometimes the mother or father sat alone in the circle of light and read aloud to the others clustered about in the shadows.

Kerosene lamps required daily attention, including filling them with oil, trimming the wicks, washing the chimneys; there was always the danger of broken chimneys, spilled kerosene, and fires. Many businesses in towns and individuals in both town and country used calcium carbide and water to generate their own acetylene gas for illumination. These gas lamps were stationery since they had to be attached to the pipes of the system and they had to be lighted with a match, as did the kerosene lights. (The headlights of the first automobiles were calcium carbide systems.) Electric lighting was eagerly sought by homeowners and even before transmission lines were extended to the country some farms were generating their own electricity with gasoline-driven Delco systems.

Because so much of the household work centered there, kitchens were always large and so was the adjoining store room. Besides the range and the table the other essential piece of furniture was the kitchen cabinet, a marvelously compact work place with bins for flour and sugar, racks for salt, spices and vanilla extract, drawers for knives, forks, spoons, pancake turners, etc., shelves above for mixing bowls and measuring cups and below for pots and pans, and somewhere a breadboard and a rolling pin. No compact apartment kitchen has ever surpassed the design of the kitchen cabinet.



The kitchen usually had a sink even before there was running water and it might even have an indoor pump.

During the summer the kitchen was the scene of endless preserving of food by pickling, canning, or drying. Before there was paraffin in the stores, jams and jellies were sealed with the beeswax left when honey had been extracted from the comb. Chickens were usually dressed at home; in good weather it was better to pick them out of doors but on cold or rainy days the whole job of scalding, picking, singeing and cleaning could be done in the kitchen. If meats were to be smoked they were prepared there before being taken to the smoke house. Most housewives baked their own bread and cakes — there were no cake mixes yet. It was about 1915 before Puget Power began an advertising campaign urging women to begin cooking with electricity.

The storeroom near the kitchen held the bags of flour and sugar, the boxes of crackers, the jars and crocks of preserved food, the empty containers to be filled from the summer bounty. Somewhere there was a root cellar, a "pit" (vegetables piled on dry ground and covered with straw and earth) — a cool, dark place, safe from freezing, that held the potatoes and carrots, the parsnips, squashes and beets, the winter apples, and any other foods which could be stored fresh. Cabbage kept better as sauerkraut and was in a big stoneware crock in the storeroom.

Perishables and left-overs could be kept only for a short time. Some homes had ice boxes, insulated chests kept cool by the large cake of ice in the top; other homes depended on the circulation of outside air through a screened cupboard, preferably on the north side of the house.

Almost all families in the country and many of those in town ran charge accounts at the stores, especially the grocery stores. Extra butter, fruit, and eggs could be taken to the store for credit. Staples were bought in quantities — sugar in 100-pound sacks, flour in 49-pound bags, crackers in 10- or 20-pound wooden or tin boxes, coffee in the bean ground to order when purchased, cheese cut from large wheels, rice, beans, and dried fruits weighed out of barrels or boxes. When the charges and credits were figured out and the farmer paid his bill after the crops were in (or the city man when he received his salary) the merchant knocked off any odd pennies as too insignificant for attention and gave a bag of candy for the children along with the receipt. Practically all grocery stores and



LaConner, Wash. *Apr 21* 1904

*M. Geo. Reay*  
Bought of **James Gaches,**

REPORTER AND DEALER IN  
CLOTHING, DRY GOODS, BOOTS AND SHOES, GROCERIES,  
Cigars and Tobacco, Canned, Linoleum, Oil Cloths, Wall Paper,  
Furniture, Hardware, Paints and Oils, Feed, Etc.

I consider this receipt due the purpose of showing you the state of your account, according to my ledger (irrespective as to whether bills are due or not) if any errors exist advise me. For each amount (if any) as may be due I shall be pleased to receive remittance. Interest charged in all cases after maturity.

May 20	6 1/2 lb Ham	104	4 lb flour	125	2 20	
	C Baby Powder	24	3 Can Corn	30	55	
	Cracked wheat	50	Loaf	25	75	
	Pail Lard	65	Can Coffee	30	120	4 79
24	1 lb Sugar	15	4 lb Bacon	65		2 00
28	1 lb Sugar	15	4 lb Bacon	65		2 00
June 4	3 lb Rock	Late				57
30	10 lb Beef	Food	Resident			30 48
July 1	1 lb Sugar	15	2 lb Coffee	25	50	
18	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	30	80
19	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	
23	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	25	150
24	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	190
25	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	6 45
26	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	175
27	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	121
28	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	95
29	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	30
30	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	50
31	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	25
1	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
2	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
3	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
4	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
5	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
6	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
7	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
8	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
9	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
10	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
11	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
12	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
13	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
14	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
15	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
16	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
17	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
18	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
19	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
20	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
21	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
22	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
23	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
24	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
25	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
26	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
27	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
28	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
29	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125
30	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	55
31	2 lb Sugar	30	2 lb Coffee	25	125	125

La Conner. James Gaches' Store, like most stores serving the farmers, expected the regular customers to have charge accounts which might be paid monthly or when the crops were harvested. The heading shows the variety of goods carried by a general store in 1904.

Original from Vera Reay Hedlund

meat markets delivered orders in town and for some distance into the country.

Grocery stores did not handle milk, except condensed milk in cans, nor bread and cakes. Fresh milk was either produced at home by the family cow, bought from a neighbor who had one, or purchased from a dairy which delivered to the door every morning. If the housewife did not make





Nick Schumaker living room in his home by the Samish River bridge near Edison around 1914. Portraits on the wall are of his father and mother.

From  
Bertha Schumaker



Farmyard in the early 1900s, rail fence, horses, colt, cow, windmill, and farm buildings with old stumps still scattered around. This is the Henry Holtcamp farmyard near Sedro Woolley.

Picture from William Holtcamp

Mr. and Mrs. Adam Carlson in the kind of buggy which most country people drove.

Skagit County Historical Museum



her own bread or cakes she went to a bakery to buy them. One of the oldest business establishments in the county is the City Bakery in Mount Vernon, established by P. J. Pedersen in 1896 and run by him and by his son George until the death of the latter in 1960; it was then sold out of the family but has continued to operate.

On some large farms there were hired men to be fed the year round and in summer practically every farm had harvest crews. About 25 men arrived with the threshing machine and they stayed, eating three square meals a day, till the job was finished. If it was interrupted by rain for several days or a week the meals became a nightmare for the farm women. Toward 1920 new machines employed smaller crews, better roads tempted men to go home for the night, and much of the burden of cooking for threshers was lifted from the women.

Single people who came to a community had no place to live except rooming and boarding houses since there were as yet almost no apartments. The rooming houses were often the homes of older couples or widows whose grown children had left to set up their own establishments. Running a boarding house, either for school teachers or for single men, entailed much more work than simply letting extra rooms, but a woman who ran a boarding house and set a good table never lacked paying customers.

The hoboes were a group of homeless men who traveled the country, generally along the rail lines where they rode empty box cars or flat cars from stop to stop. The personal possessions of a "blanket stiff" consisted of the clothes he was wearing, a blanket, some cans for cooking and eating





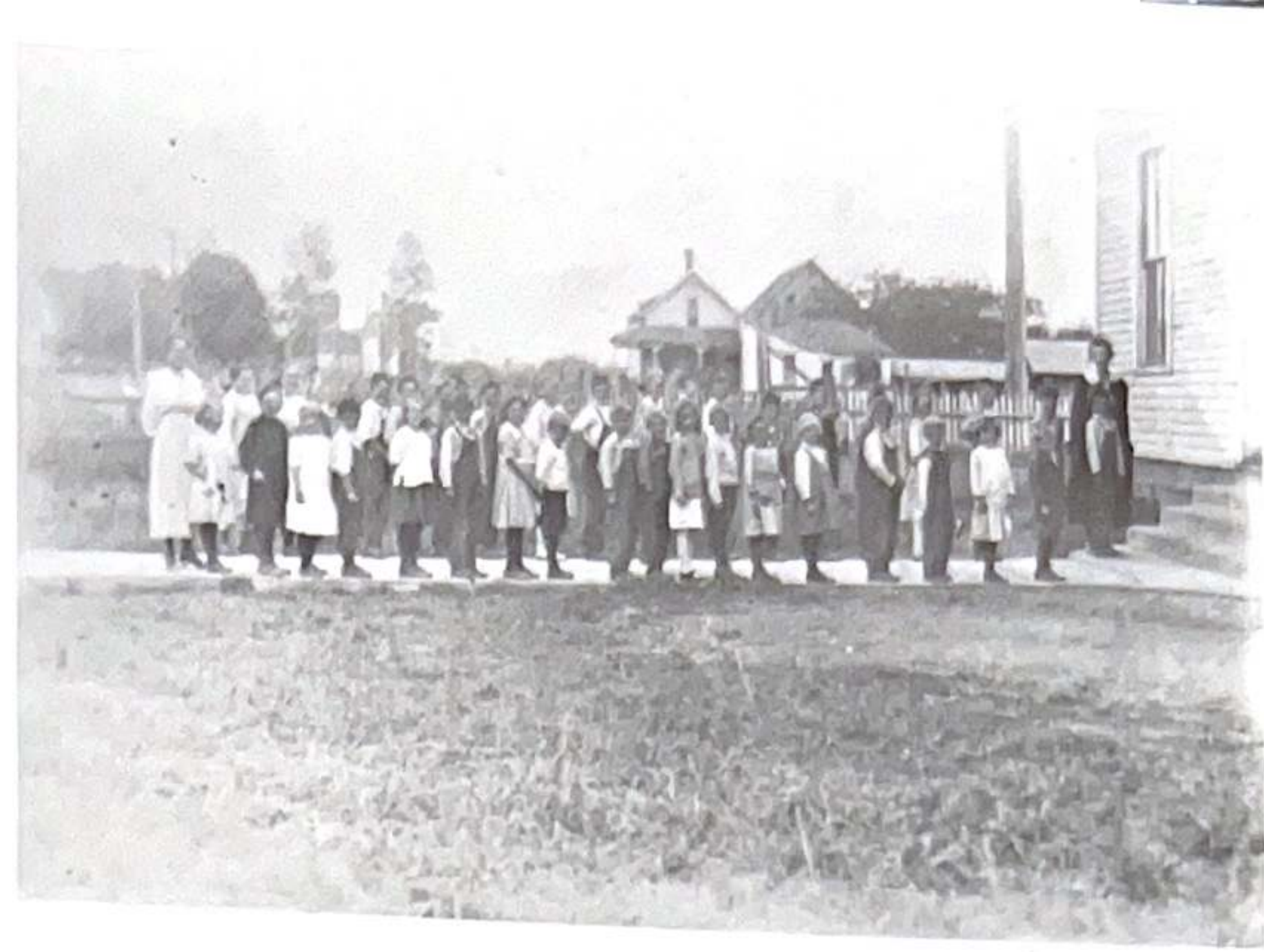
A group of early settlers at the J. O. Rudene place on Pleasant Ridge about 1898. L to r, on ground: Capt. Eli Polk Mounts (cousin to Mrs. Rudene), John Arthur Cornelius, Mildred Vera Cornelius, the dog Carlo, Philip Alvin Cornelius, Charles William Cornelius. Seated: Unidentified, J. O. Rudene, Mrs. Rudene, Mrs. Ella Crandall Williams, Charles Williams. Back row, standing: Arthur E. Cornelius, Jennie Rachel Williams Cornelius, Wm. John Cornelius, Nellie Cornelius, Henry Williams (Jennie's brother), Lew Inman, Mary Williams Inman.

*From Betty Cornelius Bowen*

in the "hobo jungles" along the tracks, a razor, a knife, and a few other useful articles. For food they knocked at the back doors of houses and asked for a handout or offered to chop kindling or carry wood in exchange for a meal. In cold weather a warm-hearted housewife might give a shivering tramp both hot food and a ragged overcoat which she had tried vainly to persuade her husband to discard. Whatever his reception the hobo left a code mark on the gatepost, understood by the rest of the fraternity, to tell the next brother what kind of a reception he might expect at that particular house.

Disease was more common and more serious than it is today. While vaccination against smallpox had been known for many years and diphtheria antitoxin was being developed in the 1890s, most of modern medical and surgical knowledge was still to come. There were no antibiotics, no sulfa drugs, no treatment for diabetes except diet. For tuberculosis, fresh air, good food, and bed rest were the only prescriptions. Relatively little was known about nutrition.

Much medical treatment was non-professional. In the 1890s almost all babies were born at home with the help of neighbor women who became experienced midwives. Doctors were called more often after 1900 but deliveries were still at home except where there were complications. General stores, drug stores, and mail order catalogs were full of patent medicines which promised miraculous cures; many had as high an alcoholic content as whiskey and included some morphine derivative. Soothing syrups for babies quieted their cry-



Corner of McLean and Bradshaw Roads was Ridgeway. Picture shows the Ridgeway Baptist Church in left background, Gear home in center background, and in right foreground the Ridgeway or Gear School. Undated but probably around 1910.

*Photograph by Frank E. Anderson*

ing by doping them with laudanum. The worst of these frauds were outlawed by the first Pure Food and Drugs Act passed in 1906 but the folk medicine practiced at home continued.

Children wore asafetida bags about their necks to ward off germs. In the spring they were dosed with a nauseous mixture of sulphur and molasses as a "spring tonic." Lung congestion was treated with mustard plasters or poultices of mashed potatoes or onions. Liniments and salves, bought for use on the horses or cows, were sometimes carried into the house and used on humans. Rawleigh's Antiseptic Salve was marked on the box, "For Man or Beast." Another standby was Watkin's Liniment.

Epidemics of scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough, chicken pox, and mumps were common, and diphtheria and typhoid fever were not uncommon. The doctor was usually called in cases of serious illness; he came by buggy or Model T Ford with his drugs and instruments in a little black bag. If the illness was diagnosed as scarlet fever or diphtheria a large, red QUARANTINE sign was tacked on the front of the house and no one might leave it until the patient died or recovered and the house and all clothing and books had been fumigated or burned. The occasional case of smallpox was at first consigned to a pest house and looked after by someone who had recovered from the disease, but by 1910 smallpox was being quarantined like scarlet fever and diphtheria. Whooping cough killed many babies and measles caused permanent disabilities in others but still these were not regarded very seriously.

During this period doctors discovered that





A. J. Lawson and his wife Emily in 1910 at their place on the Samish delta looking toward Blanchard Mountain and the Chuckanuts. The pile at the right of the picture is material for the pipe line which carried water from a spring on Blanchard Mountain to Edison. Pipes were made by boring out logs as shown here. Between the couple at the foot of the mountain can be seen the start of the road which later became Chuckanut Drive. This early work was done by convict labor who lived in a guarded camp at Blanchard in 1910 for several months.

*Picture from Willard Lawson*

Mount Vernon City Water Works when the water supply came from the Martha Washington springs at the foot of Lincoln hill on East Kincaid Street. From there it was pumped to a concrete reservoir on top of the hill 1907. The maintenance men are C. C. (Cleve) Finley and Marvin King.

*Gift of Mrs. Lucile Elkins Finley*



The brick building was the Anacortes City Hall, Fire Hall, and jail. Fire horses made good time in going to a fire and understood their business almost as well as the firemen.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*





Burlington Hospital made famous in the area by the work of Dr. H. E. Cleveland.

*Picture from  
Jessie Whitney  
Pulver*

"acute colic" in adults was caused by an inflamed or ruptured appendix which could be removed in an operation, a relatively safe and simple one if the appendix was merely inflamed but extremely serious if it had ruptured. It became almost fashionable to have one's appendix removed at the slightest sign of inflammation. Doctors also operated for kidney stones, gall stones, tonsils, and adenoids. They attended many accident victims. Shingle weavers lost fingers in the saws, logs and tree limbs fell or rolled on loggers, domestic animals injured those caring for them by goring or kicking or trampling. People were shot accidentally or on purpose. Farmers fell off hay wagons or were hurt in farm machinery or injured in runaways. By 1915 the newspapers were full of automobile accidents, mostly minor but some serious.

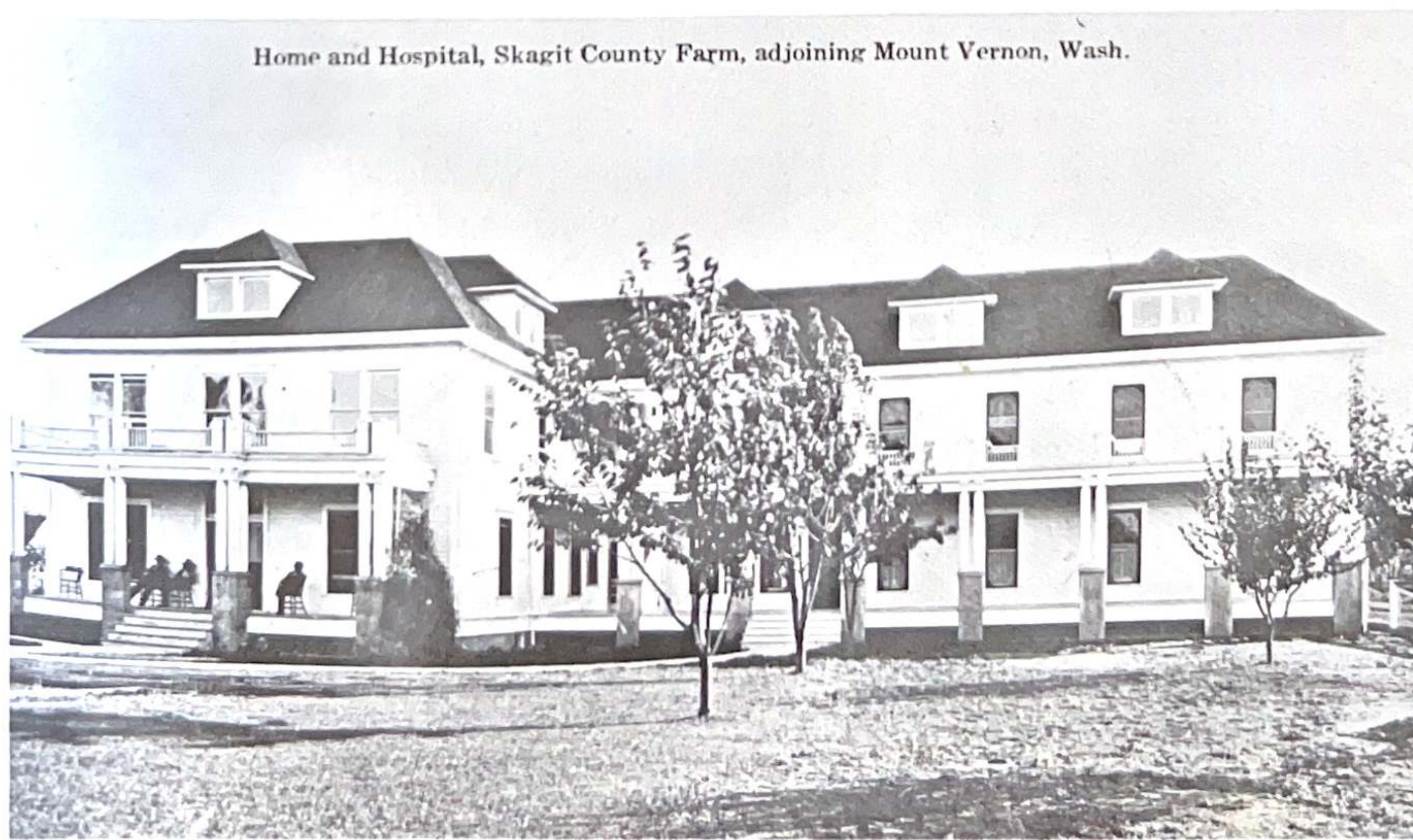
Veterinarians who cared for animals learned much about health and disease and sometimes turned their skills to caring for humans. Dentists ground out cavities without benefit of novocaine, paying no attention to the moans or screams of the patient. In Hamilton the barber pulled teeth

and did not do it gently. Doctors were more kindly and sympathetic than skillful and the patient's recovery resulted more from natural healing than from medicine. The occasional really skillful doctors and surgeons like Dr. H. E. Cleveland of Burlington left a legend behind them.

Hospitals were few — St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Sedro Woolley, the Burlington Hospital where Dr. Cleveland reigned, and somewhat later the Rowley Hospital in Mount Vernon, the Day Lumber Company Hospital in Big Lake, and the County Hospital at the Poor Farm in Harmony (the last named was part of the campaign against tuberculosis which got under way in the county after 1912). All were primitive by today's standards but they served well in their time.

Children in the 1890 to 1920 era had a clearly recognized status as part of the family group but were not thought of as being separate in spite of some slight evidence of a special child culture. There were still plenty of chores for children to do on the farm, though by 1920 it was getting harder in town to find the tasks through which a

Home and Hospital, Skagit County Farm, adjoining Mount Vernon, Wash.



Skagit County Poor Farm and Tuberculosis Hospital built about 1910 and operated for many years. The wing to the right was the hospital.

*From a postcard  
belonging to  
Margaret Benedict  
Southwick*



child became a contributing part of the household. Country boys were as eager to drive horses doing farm work as they are today to drive a tractor. Few children had allowances but there were many earning opportunities open to them. There were various farm jobs at 10 cents an hour; strawberry picking was paid for by the box; blackberries grew on the burned-over hills and could be picked and sold to the Northern Pacific train crews for 50 cents a gallon; beer bottles collected from streets, alleys, and roadsides were redeemed for cash. These activities were essentially like those of adults.

Children's games which succeeding generations of children learned from each other were evidence of a child-culture. There were relatively few books written just for children but there were delightful periodicals which taught youngsters to watch eagerly for the postman, *LITTLE FOLKS* for the small fry, the *YOUTH'S COMPANION* and *ST. NICHOLAS* for older children. Roller skating came into vogue for the young after 1900 as cement sidewalks were built. The 1897 Sears catalog offers only ice skates but that of 1908 shows a full line of roller skates. Roller rinks were being built in various parts of the county around 1910 and any large smooth floor or paved street was a good practice area.

With all their activities there was little time for juvenile delinquency though outrageous pranks were a normal part of Halloween. If the pranksters were caught red-handed they made restitution, but if the damage was only discovered on November 1 there was no search for the culprits.

Victorian women of the 19th Century were supposed to be delicate and subject to fainting spells but the pioneer women of Skagit County seldom fitted the stereotype. Most of them were physically and spiritually strong, able to be of help to a pioneering husband or to go it alone as a widow, either "grass" or "sod." The paid jobs which were open to women were limited in number; nevertheless there were many alternatives to the oldest profession. Women were welcomed as cooks in logging camps or as waitresses in camp dining rooms. They waited tables in town restaurants and soda fountains, and clerked in shops which catered to the female trade. Some founded and ran millinery shops and dry goods stores.

From the earliest days women managed post-offices in many settlements. When telephones began they staffed the switchboards. One of them, the famous Nell Quackenbush Wheelock of Concrete, not only worked in the office but went out

and climbed the telephone poles to repair the lines, and then played the violin for dances on Saturday nights. Most of the teachers in the one- and two-room schools were girls and women. Mrs. Wells taught for two years at the Jennings school, taking her infant son with her each morning so that she could care for him during the day.

Women ran boarding houses and were inn and hotel keepers. Some women not only did their own housework but went out by the day to help with the cleaning, washing, and baking of other households. There were dressmakers who either sewed for others in their own home or went from house to house, staying for several days to make over old garments or construct new ones for the feminine members of the family. The income from all these employments was low and how women made ends meet is one of the marvels of the time.

Devices for making ends meet were routine in most families, however. When the flour sacks were empty they were carefully washed and became dish towels or underwear. Some people even sewed four of them together for sheets. Sugar sacks were coarser but they might become strainers or dust cloths. Unbleached muslin, hemmed at the ends, would make a bedsheet and successive washings would bleach it out white. When sheets grew thin in the middle they were split down the center, the selvages sewed together, the raw edges hemmed. What did it matter if a sheet had a seam down the middle? Clothes were mended as long as possible; worn stockings were darned at the heel and toe. Every town had numerous shoe repair shops and it was expected that a pair of shoes would be half-soled one or more times before it was considered worn out. The clothes of the mother and the older children were made over for the younger ones. Worn-out wool garments eventually became carpet rags and worn-out cottons were made into mop cloths or dust rags. The garments which were put away in trunks and have come down to us for our museum collection were the ones which were too fine in style or material or too rich in romantic memories to make the steady descent which was the fate of most garments.

The old maxims, "Waste not, want not," and "A penny saved is a penny earned," were the precepts on which most people operated. Our forbears would have regarded as sheer lunacy the notion that waste and unnecessary purchases were the road to prosperity.



## Chapter IX

### VERY UNUSUAL WEATHER

Annual rainfall in different areas of Skagit County ranges from less than 20 inches to more than 60, progressing from the western part, which is in the rain shadow of the Olympics and the mountains of Vancouver Island, to the eastern mountains and valleys where the wet winds from the sea rise to higher elevations, are chilled, and drop their moisture. The Pacific, the ocean currents, winds, and mountains determine the climate far more than latitude which is north of the northern tip of Maine and roughly in that of southern Newfoundland. In contrast to those bleak regions, Skagit winters are usually mild and wet in the lowlands, snowy and cold in the mountains. Clear days in the winter are always cold days, usually freezing. Rainy days are warmer, but wet weather at 40 degrees does not feel warm. However, lawns and pastures stay green all winter and roses often bloom until Thanksgiving, while the earliest spring flowers appear in January.

Summers are usually sunny but seldom hot. There is little summer rain; thunder storms often rage around the mountain tops but seldom occur in the delta. However, there is enough moisture in the ground so that crops seldom suffer from lack of rain. Hay and strawberries are more likely to be harmed by too much of it in June and July than other crops are by too little.

The preceding two paragraphs are a description of the "normal" climate, a sort of average of all the years. But another aspect is the frequent occurrence of "very unusual weather." Summers may be consistently beautiful from May to October—or they may turn out to be cold and wet. People have been known to grumble after a dismal June, "I hope summer comes on Sunday this year so we can go fishing or at least have one picnic." Winter may pass without a flake of snow below 2000 feet and with rosebuds lingering on till spring—or the normal rain of winter may turn out to be all frozen.

The most famous winters in our period were those of 1893 and of 1916.

In the fall of 1892 the first wagon bridge over the Skagit was being built at Mount Vernon to replace the ferry. The construction of one of the piers was well advanced when a warm Chinook wind began to blow on November 18. As the river rose, logs, stumps, uprooted trees, and other driftwood began to pile up against the pier and all efforts to dislodge them failed. On November 20 the timbers of the pier snapped and the driftwood and pier went down the torrent together. The flood overwhelmed the dikes of Mount Vernon; water was three feet deep in the streets and even deeper in Fir and Conway. The railway was under water so there were no trains for five days. The swift current and floating debris made the river very hazardous for steamboats for days.

The flood was followed by a January freeze. Cakes of drifting ice blocked up where the tides slowed the current so that the river was frozen over from its mouth to a point above Mount Vernon. No sternwheelers could reach the river towns for weeks. Ferries could not run and there were no bridges. Some intrepid souls crossed the river on the ice, even with teams and wagons, but not many attempted such a dangerous feat.

The experience with the ice spurred work on the bridge at Mount Vernon which was resumed as early as conditions permitted and finished in 1893. It had a draw span to permit the passage of boats. Four blasts on the whistle of a sternwheeler signalled her approach and brought the bridge tender into action; he closed off the approaches, unlocked the draw span with a key lever, and then fitting the long lever into the gears walked round and round and round, slowly turning the draw span to a position parallel to the bank, a heavy job for two men and a tremendous task for one.

The most famous winter for snow and ice was





March's Point in the winter of 1898-99. Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Burdon are in the sleigh. Sleights and sleds were common on the upper Skagit where winters usually brought a good deal of snow but the chance to use them on Fidalgo Island occurred so rarely that few people owned them. *Picture from Jean Forrest*

that of 1915-16. November and December were normal, but in late January the rain turned to snow which kept coming down for three days until it was 36 inches deep on the level from Anacortes to Sedro Woolley and deeper in drifts and up-river. All traffic stopped in the county, even the milk wagons and the RFD mail wagons for a couple of days. Taking care of farm animals was an ordeal, for they had to be sheltered and fed and snow had to be melted to give them drinking water. Cows had to be milked even if the milk was not collected.

After the snow stopped the weather cleared and turned very cold. Highways packed down and milk wagons and mail wagons began getting through. It took about two weeks for the railways and electric interurban cars to resume normal service because of the depth of the snow and the shortage of snow plows. The Skagit River was blocked with ice and frozen over from its mouth upstream to a point above Mount Vernon. Skagit County was a winter wonderland which people had little equipment for enjoying. Some found skates and sleds and the stores sold all they had. The ice on the river was smooth enough for skating at Conway and there was good ice on lakes and sloughs. People improvised sleighs. Unfortunately skis were still unknown in this part of the country.

Then came the thaw. There were as yet few pavements and most roads were only lightly graveled. Many of them became a morass through which horses slogged painfully and in which cars were frequently mired and had to be hauled out by teams of horses for there were no tow trucks yet. The snow lasted in shaded spots in the mountains through the next summer and the river ran

high during all the warm months.

Excessively dry summers have always posed another problem. There have always been forest fires in the summer months, started by thunder storms among the peaks. Conservationists are learning today to recognize them as part of the natural pattern of forest renewal. Such fires are usually self-limiting, beginning at high altitudes and burning to the summit of a ridge, or being extinguished by the rain which follows the storm.

As the country was settled new fire hazards multiplied and became critical in times of low humidity and a dry forest floor. As prospectors, looking for gold and other minerals, swarmed up the creeks and over the mountains, campfires which had not been completely extinguished could easily spread through the bed of evergreen needles and suddenly explode into a raging conflagration. Experienced hunters, hikers, and prospectors knew how to be cautious but not all were wise to the dangers.

A dry summer offered a fine opportunity for the men clearing stump ranches to burn slashings and stumps. Most men were careful. Only a few such fires got away into the standing timber but those that did were serious.

Logging operations brought men, their cook houses and bunk houses, their wood-burning locomotives, donkey engines, and dry debris into areas where a careless spark could start a destructive fire. A careful study early in the 20th Century estimated that "down to 1902 more timber had been burned than had been logged." In August and September of 1902 there were 100 forest fires in the area extending from Lyman to central Oregon, causing a loss estimated at the time at \$13,000,000. It was obviously time to do something about the problem.

Washington passed its first law on the control of forests in 1903, one which was completely ineffective. In 1905 it established a State Board of Forest Commissioners with a budget of \$7,500 to last them for two years. The commissioners solicited gifts from private sources in order to begin a program. In 1906 they established a closed season from May 1 to October 1 during which permits were required for burning and they hired a few wardens. These regulations helped but did little about accidental fires, especially those connected with logging.

In 1908 the owners of two and a half million acres of forests in the State of Washington organized themselves into the Washington Fire Associ-





The Skagit River looking downstream from some unidentified spot in 1916.

*Picture contributed to Skagit County Historical Society by E. J. Jacobs*

Fir-Conway bridge over the South Fork of the Skagit River in 1916 when the river was frozen over so solidly that people skated on it. The grandparents of Mrs. Edward

Moore were among the skaters.

*Picture from Mrs. Edward Moore*







First Street in Mount Vernon in the 1916 snow. The picture is taken looking north from Kincaid Street. At the right behind the trees is the house of Captain Decatur. The first building beyond the trees is the old courthouse.

*Picture from Jim Kean*

ation, taxed themselves two cents an acre for a budget, and set up rules for their operations during the dangerous season; they also set up an 80-man patrol to cooperate with the state wardens. In 1914, which was a bad fire year, the wardens and patrol put out some 600 fires, nearly 100 of some magnitude, though of course only a fraction of them were in Skagit County. The smoke was so dense that the sun was a red ball which could be looked at directly all summer and crops suffered for lack of sunshine. It was not until 1924 that the United States established the U.S. Forest Service patrols and lookouts.

"The very unusual weather" which has always been of the most concern to people along the Skagit River has been that which produces floods. The levels of the Skagit, the Samish, and

When a crown-fire swept through the forest it killed all the trees but moved so swiftly that it did not burn the trunks. The bark dropped off the trees, the wood bleached white in the sun, and standing tree trunks made a ghost forest.

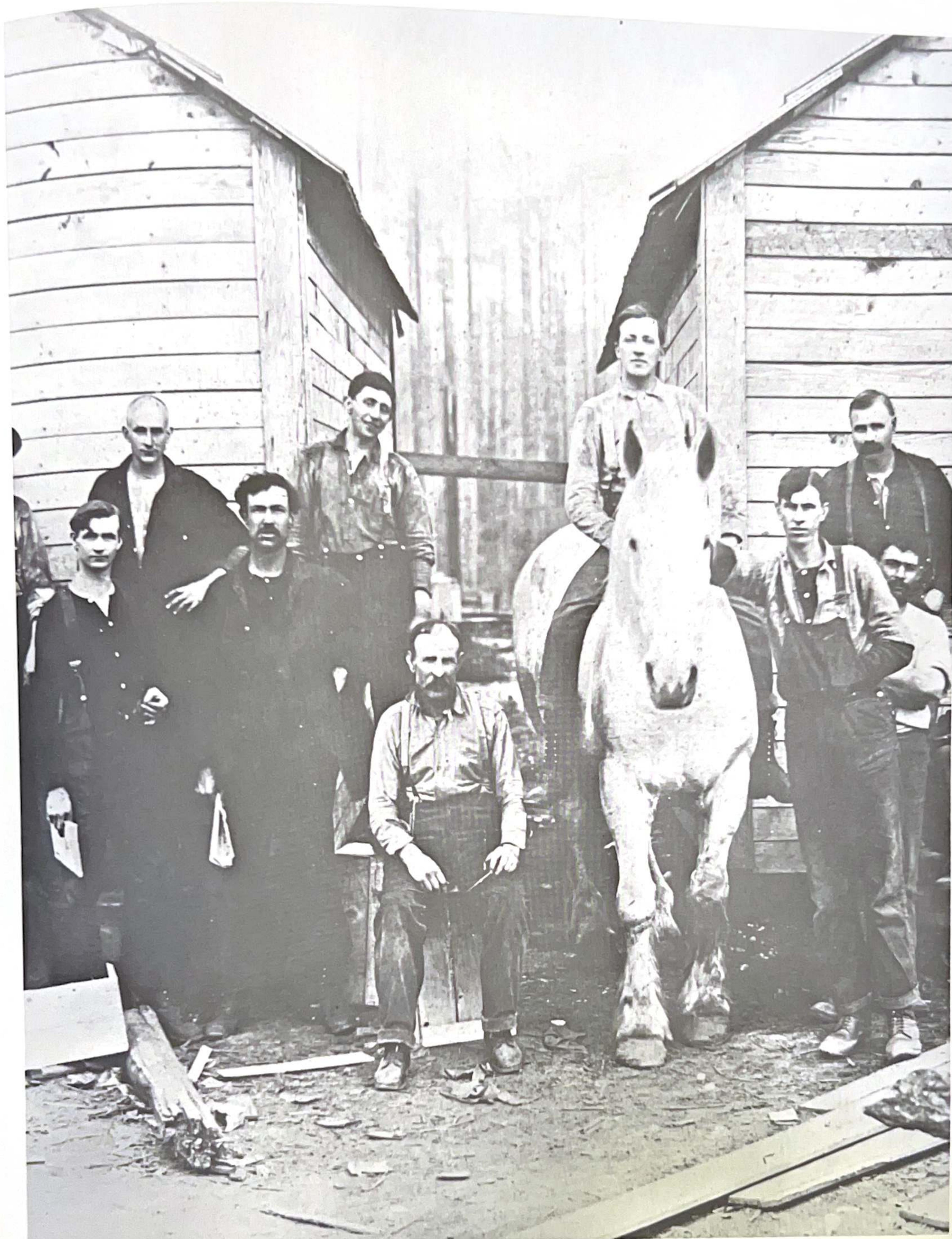
*Wm. Rivord*



The big snow of 1916 at the corner of the Carnation plant in Mount Vernon. The men digging are Eric Ratcliffe, an unidentified man, Tommy Davis, and one of the Pulliams.

*Picture from Jim Kean*





The men in this picture are unidentified but the white horse is the central figure in a dramatic forest fire story. When an uncontrolled fire was racing up the hill toward Camp 3 on Hamilton Mountain the locomotive hastily evacuated the men from the camp, getting them out just before the bridges burned. The cook and his helper refused to leave the horse and were given up for lost.

After the fire passed the two men and the horse came down the mountain — they had taken refuge in a swamp near the camp and the men had held the horse's head and their own down while the fire passed over them.

*Picture from Mrs. H. Pulsipher in the Skagit County Historical Museum*





Diking at the pump-house of the Gun Club on lower Fir Island. Most of the dikes along salt water were built in this way by men wheeling mud along planks. These areas were too wet for horses. Dikes along the river banks could be built by teams of horses and scrapers, a much faster method.

The picture shows, l to r: John Mau-  
seth with wheel-  
barrow, Clarence  
Johnson, Gilbert  
Hanson, unidenti-  
fied, Ole Olson,  
unidentified. Fred  
Maller in back-  
ground.

*From: Les Hall  
collection.*

Digging drainage ditch No. 18 near Edison in the fall of 1910. Men are l to r: Bovitz Omdal, Roy Brown, Charlie ....., Henry Abel, John Haaland (in white shirt), Jim Taylor, Roscoe Taylor. On bank: Ingvalf Larson, Pete Hansen, John Taylor, Mr. Tucker.

*Skagit County  
Historical Museum*



Cedar puncheons to be used in the drainage of Olympia Marsh, probably between 1910 and 1915. In this drainage project ditches were dug, edged lengthwise with cedar timbers well below the surface, and then covered with cedar puncheons. After this, earth could be graded over the top and the field cultivated as if the covered ditch were not there. This was called "punching for drainage." Men in the picture are W. J. Knutzen in front and Joe Conn in the rear.

*Picture from  
Jess Knutzen*



their tributaries can and do vary within a wide range without danger to the settled land along their banks. The threat comes when warm Chinooks blow steadily from the sea and the resulting heavy rains in the foothills and the mountains fall on and run off the surface of a melting snow pack on the slopes, instead of falling as snow which melts gradually or as rain which sinks into the sponge of the forest floor. Flood conditions are most likely to occur in the late fall or early winter, though they are possible in the spring and on one historic occasion in the summer. Before scientific measurements of rainfall and snow pack the simple formula for danger on the lower Skagit was a steady wind blowing for more than 48 hours at more than 60 degrees.

When the first settlers came and the log jams were still in the river high water spread unimpeded through the sloughs and over all the land, spreading rather thinly and running off into the salt water sloughs and bays. The few farmers could take refuge on high ground and take their animals with them. The first houses were either built on high ground — LaConner, Pleasant Ridge, Bay View Ridge — or built with the first floor high above the ground, and above anticipated flood levels, as in the Conway area, though in every area as the stories of the last flood became more remote, home builders became less cautious.

It was after the salt flats were reclaimed for agriculture that floods really began to be a problem. As the tides were diked out, the land behind the dikes had to be drained; smaller sloughs were turned into drainage ditches. They were dammed at the dike line to keep out the salt water and equipped with sluice boxes at the bottom to drain the ditches when the tide was low. Drainage which worked under normal conditions was totally inadequate to take care of the fresh water lake which piled up behind the dikes in the series of freshets in 1892, 1893, and 1894. The only recourse was cutting the dikes which meant serious washing of some land, followed by the flooding of a large area with salt water until the levee could be repaired.

In the 1890s, the farmers along the Skagit from Sedro Woolley to its mouth, except for a few areas, organized themselves into diking districts. In spite of efforts to develop an overall plan none was agreed on. Each district elected diking commissioners who planned the budget and oversaw the work as the farmers built their own dikes, joining them up with the next dikes, heaping up the earth with shovels and wheelbarrows or with



New dike being built by Sipe's place using teams and scrapers around 1900. Among the drivers were Grandpa Miller, Frank Jungquist, Axel Anderson, and Carl Lindbloom.

*Picture from Carl Anderson*



Dike building on Skagit Delta about 1915. It was hard to build strong dikes on Fir Island because all the soil was rich sediment deposited by the river over the years. To strengthen them where they were eroding men blasted rock in quarries, loaded it on scows, and towed it by launch to the place where it was needed. This rock was quarried on property owned by John Summers and is being unloaded by John Summers and F. X. Thein near the Thein place on the North Fork. Visible across the river is the place of Charles and Lizzie Miller.

*Picture from Anne Summers Carlson*



Twelve two-horse teams pulling scrapers worked under Charlie Storrs in 1900 building a new dike. The record does not say whether an old dike had washed out or whether this was the first one on the site.

*Picture from Carl Anderson*



scrapers drawn by teams of horses, making the sides of whatever slope and the tops of whatever height seemed good to them and the commissioners. The objective in each area was to make these particular levees so strong that a flood would break some other dike instead, so there was a real incentive to do a good job. However, experts point out that the dikes were built too close to the river, their sides were too steep, and the cross section too narrow for safety.

Difficulties were found in the method, too. Since the delta soil had accumulated over many years often logs were buried below the surface unknown to the dike builders. As these rotted their trunks became channels for flood waters to boil up inside the dikes, undermining the whole structure. Muskrats were still common along the river banks and their burrows often weakened the dikes in the same way. Such weak spots could be plugged if found early enough and if the earth for stopping the mushy leaks was shoveled into burlap bags before being packed in the dangerous boil, but many dike failures came from these causes.

The strength of the levee depended, too, upon the earth of which it was built. If it happened to contain a large amount of clay the structure would be fairly solid, but even a large pile of sand or peat would soften if the water stood against it too long and the current could easily wash it away.

The North Fork bridge shortly before it was replaced. The picture and the snag boat, the Preston, are much later than the time with which this book deals, but the bridge was built in our period. An interesting feature of the

The flooding river runs yellow; the current is swift and carries a great deal of driftwood and there is a steady and menacing roar as it rushes through the trees and bushes outside the dikes and eats at its banks at every bend. It is a never-to-be-forgotten experience to stand on the top of the dike with the angry river lapping over the edge of the roadway, many feet above the quiet fields and homes inside.

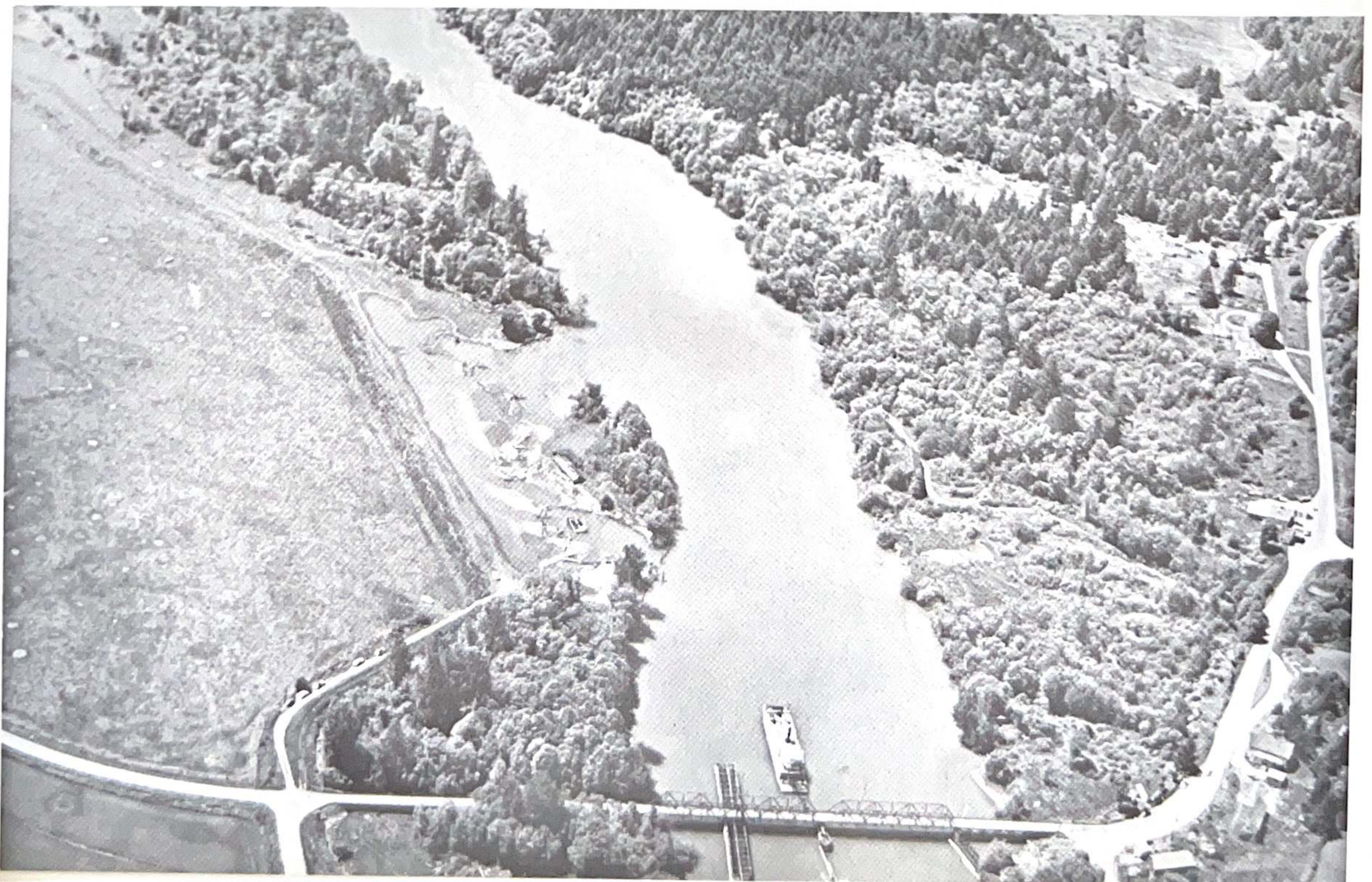
There were many floods between 1890 and 1920. In 1894 and 1909 practically the whole flood plain from above Marblemount to salt water was inundated. In 1897 the floods were particularly severe on the Cascade River and the upper Skagit.

Glee Davis of Sedro Woolley has written his memories of these years. When he was five years old in 1890 his mother, Lucinda Davis, came with her three children to a homestead on the Cascade River a mile above where it enters the Skagit. One of her brothers had been drowned before she came; the other, Will Leach, was with the family quite a bit, but the pioneer woman and her young children had to depend mainly on themselves to meet emergencies. Here are his memories:

June, 1894. There were two distinct floods which cut badly into the homestead at the big bend above the clearing. This was of much concern because there was a strip of old, deep river channel between us and the high rocky bench land; we always had a foot bridge across it. The

picture is the straight section of dike at the left, built after floods had washed out a large part of the dike and many acres of land to the right of it.

*Picture from Ralph Rothrock*





Barratt family whose house was flooded came over from the Skagit twice to stay with us during the peak of the two high waters. This flood also took out the Miners' Bridge two miles above Newhalem (Goodell's Landing), the first horse bridge to cross the Skagit, built by the miners in 1892.

November, 1896. Another very high water did a lot of cutting of our land at the big bend. This time the water came in from the old channel and around the house, floating the board walk. We began to see what the Cascade might do, but still stayed on this low, shallow bottom land of good soil.

November 17, 1897. After two days of constant hard rain the Cascade was rising about one foot per hour and at noon was in the bedroom. The canoe was brought to the door and everyone set to loading household goods and food to be paddled across to the hill. Several trips were made and the last one came near not making it because the drifting debris was coming larger and swifter with the current at full force. At dark we heard a terrific smashing of timbers and glass.

Next morning the main river was coming through the middle of the cleared land and all the buildings including the chicken house full of chickens had been swept away. What little was left of the four acres of cleared land was covered with boulders and deep holes.

Cascade River had changed its channel to the north side where it holds today. Those who have kept account say that this was the highest it has ever been.

(After this disaster Mrs. Davis moved her family up the Skagit River to Cedar Bar, an area now flooded by Diablo Lake.)

November 29, 1909. The Skagit River had the highest water of record in most of the valley. Two river bridges in the canyon were washed away and much of the trail destroyed. At Benson flat, four miles below Goodell Creek, the flood of 1897 had left a silt mark on a cedar tree which I marked by a driven spike the following year and made a note of it so passers-by might see it well above their heads on the trail. Now this 1909 flood left its mark on the tree but 22 inches higher.

The flood of 1897 which destroyed the Davis homestead and buildings also washed away most of Sauk City and a great deal of farm land along the river between Rockport and Lyman as it cut new channels. There was very high water in 1906, so high that the sprawling roots of a tree carried by the flood took out a span of the original wooden truss bridge at Mount Vernon and landed it on the point just beyond Edgewater Park.

In time of danger the local farmers patrolled the dikes 24 hours a day with their shovels and whatever old oat sacks they could spare. Their wives and children helped as they could, some-



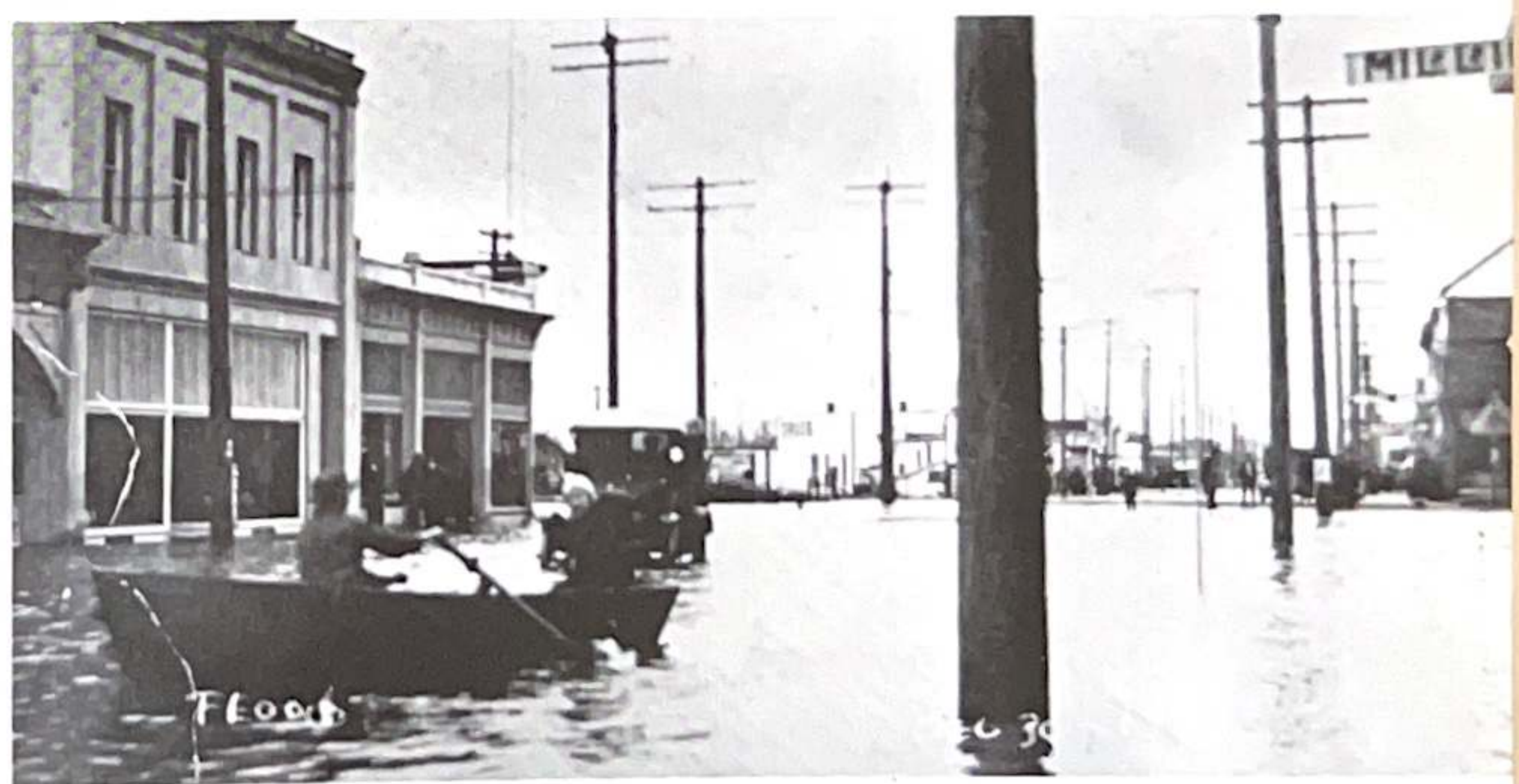
Burlington in the 1917 flood. The river rose and the dikes broke in the last days of 1917, so this picture of devastation was taken on Jan. 1, 1918.

*Picture from Skagit County Historical Museum*



Flood of 1921 in the streets of Burlington. The marks along the wall of the building below the OWL CIGARS sign show that the water had been about a foot deeper at the peak of the flood.

*From Jim Kean*



Burlington, Dec. 30, 1917. The street is shared by a Model T Ford and a rowboat.

*Picture from Skagit County Historical Society*

Conway Main Street during a flood. The Great Northern railway tracks are in the foreground under the water.

*From the Owen Tronsdal collection*







Break in the dike on the North Fork Delta area of Fir Island. The brush in the right foreground had been used to try to stop the washing of the fine soil of which the dike was built. The cross section of dike on the far side of the break shows the narrow base and top of the weak dikes of the early days. The man standing beside the break is Matt Bessner.

*Picture from Mabel Bessner Reedy*

times staying home to care for the stock, but often out among the workers, supplying coffee and food, carrying messages, reporting emergencies, spotting weak places or low points in the dike, watching for the dangerous beginnings of water boiling through muskrat holes or rotten logs under it. The time of greatest danger came when high tides at the river mouth backed up the flood water.

A steady or rising river level meant that the dikes were holding and observers waited eagerly for the time when it would begin slowly to drop on their markers set along the edge. A sudden fall in its level was an indication that somewhere there was a break. Then it was time for everyone to hurry home to see whether the water was coming his way and to care for his own house and stock.

Buildings in the immediate path of the torrent pouring through the break were likely to be swept off their foundations. If the building resisted the current its very resistance would set up an eddy at the corner, the whirling water digging a hole into which the building would soon topple. In the 1909 flood a break at the Dannemiller place between Mount Vernon and Avon undermined Nat Moores' house in this way in the middle of the night; he and his four motherless children escaped in a rowboat, swept uncontrollably in the roaring current. The house which was tipped at a rakish angle was eventually righted after the water went down but most of the furnishings were ruined.

Unless a farmer's barn had a floor high enough to top the flood, as most of them on Fir Island did, he tried to get his animals to some high spot if the water was coming his way. In 1917 when the area around Burlington was flooded many dairy cattle were fed and milked for days on the Pacific High-



The 1909 flood broke the dike between Avon and Mount Vernon. Nat Moores' house in the path of the current was undermined and toppled into the hole which the river dug. He and his family of four motherless children escaped in a rowboat in the middle of the night, swept along in the torrent. The house was later righted and put on new foundations but most of the contents were ruined.

*Picture from Hazel Moores*

way bridge at Riverside. Boyhood experiences in the 1909 flood were still vivid to Ellsworth Fulk in 1957 when he wrote this account for the Puget Sound Mail, much abbreviated here:

Approximately 3 a.m. Thanksgiving morning our neighbor, Frank Leamer, from Pleasant Ridge came driving madly with his team and surrey, horses galloping, and shouting at each farm home along the route, "Roll out! The flood waters have broken through the dike and will be here on you in the matter of an hour or so!"

We already had 20 head of horses, mares, and colts in the horse barn and approximately 30 head of young stock and dairy cows in the dairy barn. We then started piling household effects up on tables, boxes and shelves just as a precaution in case the water should rise high enough to enter the first floor of the house, (though) all buildings were built a good two feet and more off the ground. Soon after dawn, all of a sudden we heard a loud roaring and booming noise and we could see a small tidal wave rolling toward us down across the fields, logs and floating stumps crashing against the cross fences, breaking off fence posts, and thank goodness the woven wire fences headed off the bulk of the floating debris.

But the water kept on coming toward our house and buildings in a large rolling and tumbling wave. . . . Bill and I put on hip boots and secured the chicken house as best we could. . . . A few of the early birds had got out at the break of day. We could not catch them so when the water struck the yard they took to the trees in the orchard. One smart young rooster had a couple of his girl friends with him on a piece of 2 x 12 plank floating down the barnyard and every so often he would flap his wings and crow as much as to say, "Well folks, I have my women folks on a raft anyway." . . . We had forgotten about one of our brood sows who had a litter of small piglets all tucked away in a warm burrow in a straw stack back of the barn. Bill and I made



Varney was a station on the interurban between the Skagit River bridge and Burlington. Floods in 1917 and in 1921 broke the dikes below Sedro Woolley and washed out a large section of the track as it dug out the slough just north of Willard's Greenhouse, sometimes called Gates Slough and sometimes Varney Slough. This view is looking south along the tracks.

*Picture from Puget Power and Light*

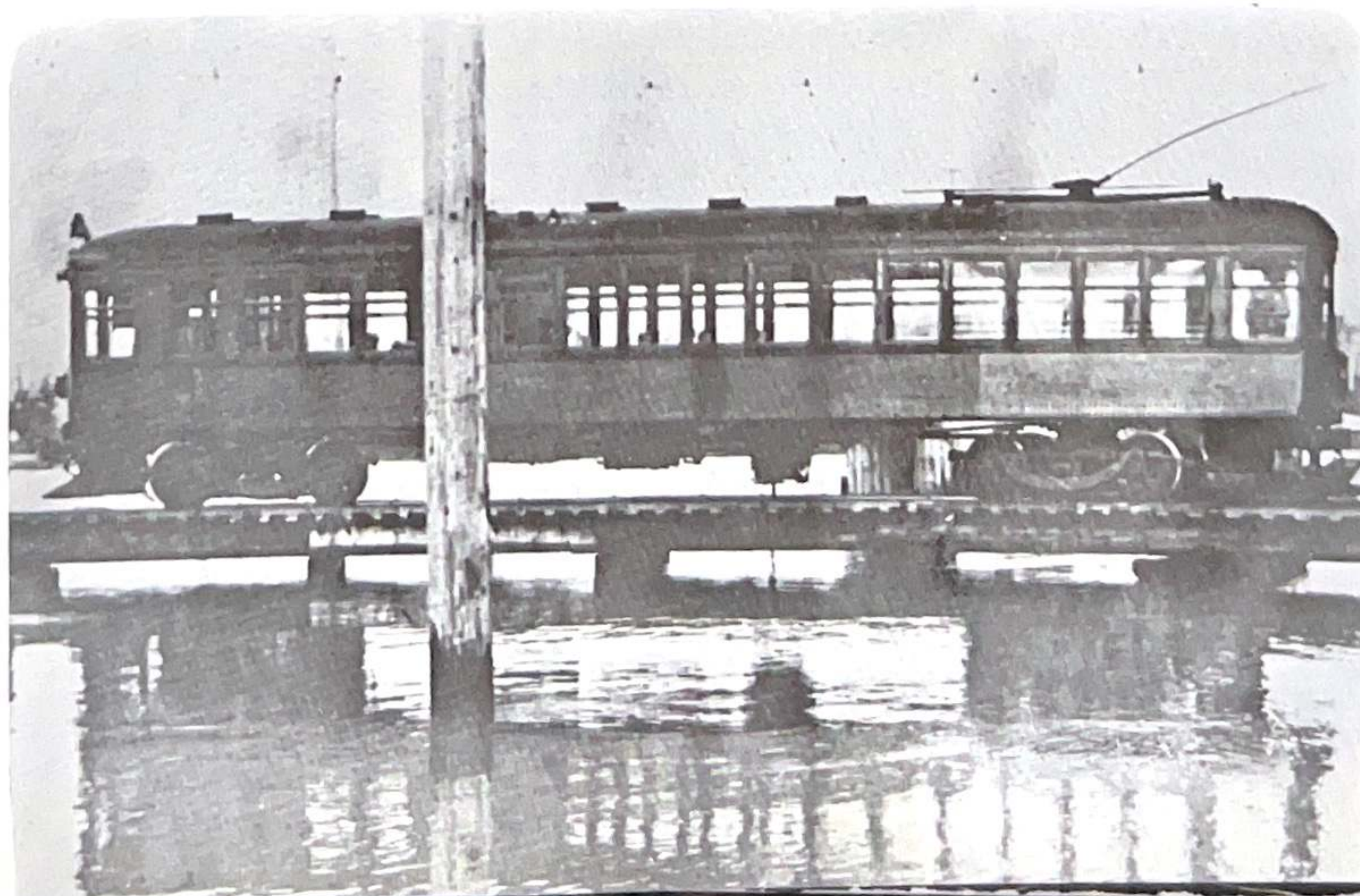


The interurban began running again while a few inches of water still covered the tracks. The man with the pole was responsible for pushing debris off the tracks. Burlington station.

*From the collection of Andy Loft*

At the end of the interurban line in Mount Vernon the cars turned around on a curving trestle over the river where the Moose Hall now stands. This was outside the dike and when the river was very high, as in this picture, the muddy waters swirling underneath made the turn-around somewhat frightening.

*From the collection of Andy Loft*







In the flood of 1909 the dikes broke in many places and most of the Skagit delta was under water all the way to LaConner. In this picture, taken from the hill in Mount Vernon, the line of the dike can be seen with water on both sides of it at the far end of the bridge.

Picture from  
Hazel Moores

our way out to the corner of the barn and sure enough here came the mama pig herding her small brood ahead of her swimming in the water coming down the lane towards the barn; we stood on each side of the gate entrance and picked the little squealing piggies out of the water as they swam past us. Mother pig had to be abandoned and left on her own as she was too much to handle in that crisis. We waded back to the house and put the piglets in Mom's clothes basket which she had fixed up all warm and cozy. . . .

We placed a measuring stick out the back door in the yard to watch and see if the water would keep on rising or gradually spread out enough over the surrounding areas to keep that from happening. But to our chagrin and dismay it kept on rising till it started entering the first floor of the house. We carried all the warm bedding upstairs. . . . Dad had managed to get home then as the working crews at the break were all tired out and could do no more there, so they made their way home on borrowed horses, rowboats, etc.

Come nighttime again we all ate some sandwiches and drank some milk that Mom had prepared and retired upstairs to wait until next morning. Early next morning we felt our way downstairs and to our disgust the water had risen four feet on the first floor which caused our tables and boxes to tip over spilling all the piled up contents into the deluge. Boy, what a mess!

We naturally supposed the horses and cattle would be safe, being in the barns. By that time here came boats and canoes of all descriptions out from LaConner. I remember Tom Esary and others being in a small gasoline launch, a put-put-putting toward our house, maneuvering past floating wire fences and debris. They were towing two other boats back of them. With the help from Pleasant Ridge neighbors, the Charles Nel-

son boys, Chester, Morris, Melvin (Dad), the Cornelius boys, John, Charles (Neap) and Phil, the O'Loughlin boys, Leamer boys and others, we managed to get the barn doors open and the horses were standing in cold water about even with their back. We shoved hay down from the mow and got them all fed. My little bay driving mare had broken her rope and got around in front of the feed room and stood up on a couple of bales of straw that were stored there so she could be above the water. The poor cows did not fare so well; we pried open the dairy barn doors and they were standing in the water with just their heads and noses sticking out above it. All we could do was to herd them out and let them take their own swimming course to higher ground. We lost practically all of them from exposure and getting tangled up in floating wire fences.

The job of swimming out the horses confronted us. We divided up the rowboats two men to a boat, one at the oars and the other on the stern seat to hold on to the halter rope while we guided the animals past floating fences on up to higher ground. . . .

Our family then was moved into LaConner where we lived upstairs in the old post office building which adjoined the Schricker Bank Building.

To make matters worse that winter, after the water had abated enough so that we could get back in the farm home, there came the big freeze-up which covered the various ponds and farm lands with solid ice. Then the young folks, together with a lot of the older folks, took to ice skating. Schwabacher Hardware, Wholesalers in Seattle could hardly keep LaConner supplied with ice skates. Harry Rock, who operated the harness shop with his brother Bill in LaConner, was our figure skating champion at that time. . . . That was quite a sight for us who had never had



Looking east on Lincoln Street in West Mount Vernon during the 1909 flood. The hill in the background is on the other side of the river. The wooden sidewalks at the left are afloat and the man and woman in the middle distance find a rowboat the best way to get around. The child at the left is Roland Liggett.

Picture from  
Lorna Liggett  
Mattson



a pair of ice skates on before. . . . By the time most of us had mastered the job of really enjoying ourselves the big thaw came.

The flood of 1909 covered practically the whole delta of the Skagit so that for days it was possible to travel almost anywhere by canoe or rowboat. Other floods were particularly severe in particular places — that of 1897 mentioned above — that of 1917 which flooded the area north of the Riverside bridge — numerous dates when Fir Island was under water and relieved the pressure on other dikes.

The Riverside Bend area, northwest of Mount Vernon (now a part of the city) for a long time resisted the idea of dikes. When the farmers did organize a diking district some of their number held up the action by lawsuits for a time, preferring frequent high water to certain taxes and possible breaks. The Riverside dikes were built after 1910.

No loss of life has been reported in floods in the county though there are dramatic tales of rescues from attic windows. In spite of some damage to buildings, some loss of stock, and a great deal of stranded debris to be cleaned up, the county seems to recover very rapidly from floods. The last major one occurred in 1921, a little beyond the time span of this book.

Since then the dams which have been built on the Baker River and the upper Skagit give a measure of protection. Newcomers to the region seem to feel almost complete confidence that the days of floods are past; old timers are less sure. Those who have seen what the river can do keep a deep respect for its power when we get a spell of "Very Unusual Weather."

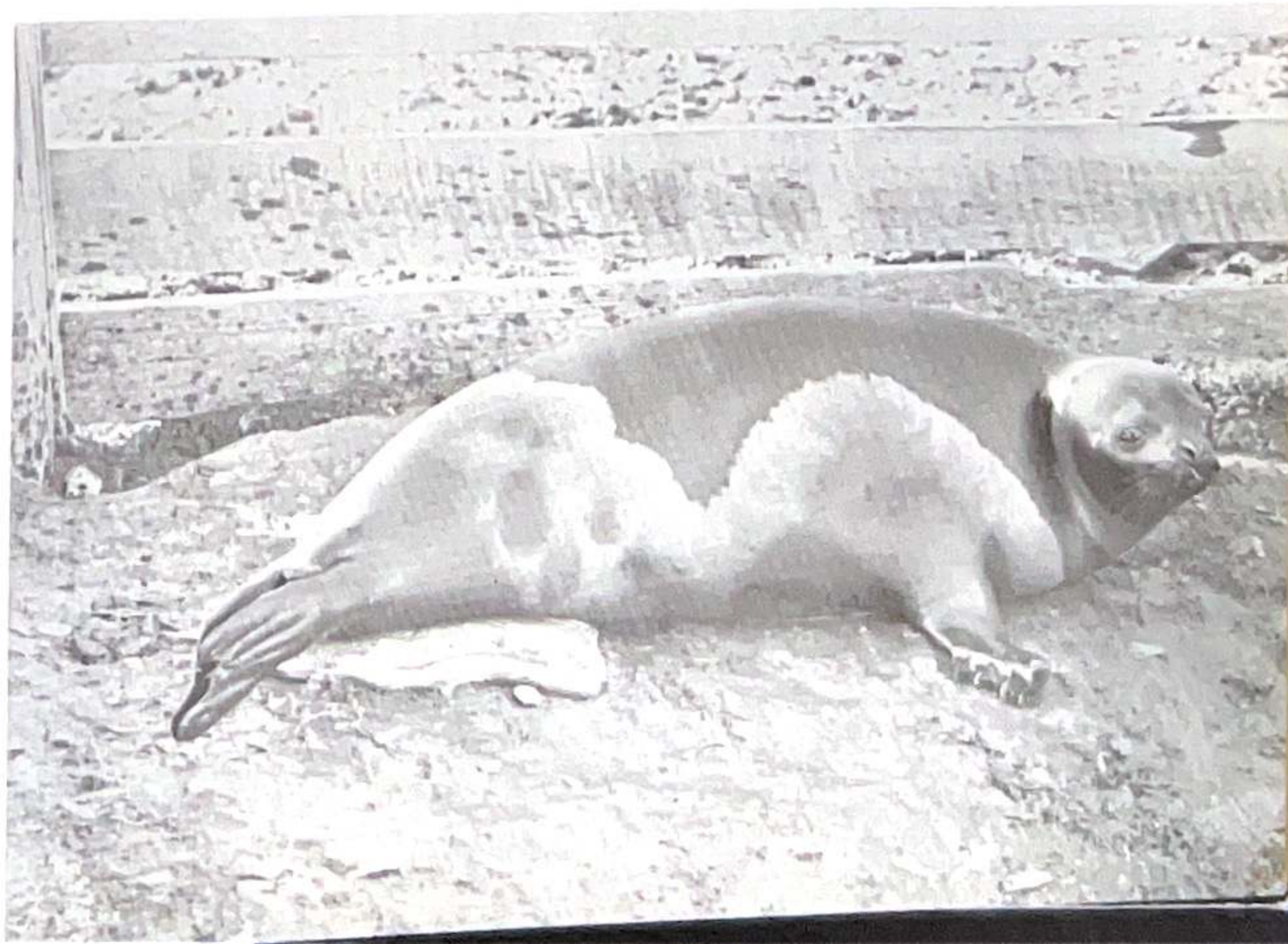


Flood waters spread widely over Fir Island whenever the dike broke on either the North or the South Fork. Houses and barns were usually built high enough to keep their floors above the water.

Picture from Mabel Bessner Reedy

Seal stranded on land when the flood of 1909 receded, found and kept for awhile by John and Richard Peth.

Skagit County Historical Museum





### ODE TO THE SKAGIT

Written around 1916, or when the first dams on the upper Skagit were being talked about, by George Fellows, great uncle of Martha Wiles, and published in the magazine of the Skagit County Dairyman's Association.

Dear old Skagit grand old river,  
With thy bluish tint of stain,  
Roaring, surging, bounding, leaping,  
In your course unto the main.

Years of struggling, tearing, grinding,  
With your great gigantic force,  
You have crumbled into atoms  
Mighty boulders in your course.

Somber fir trees, stately cedars,  
Sleeping peaceful on your banks,  
You have in your anguished hunger,  
Plied your wild and ruthless pranks.

At their roots, so firm embedded,  
Your treacherous fangs entwined,  
Seized them, grasped them, wrenched  
asunder;  
Cast them up before the wind.

Drove them weeping, drove them moaning,  
To another distant zone,  
Left them bleeding, left them dying,  
Far away in parts unknown.

You have conjured in your madness,  
And stern demoniac wrath,  
You would scatter to the four winds  
All that lie within your path.

When your rough and rugged hillside  
You have leveled to the plain,  
Then in bed of peace and quiet  
Flow in peace unto the main.

Ah, dear river, did you reckon  
With the cunningness of man  
He is planning to enslave you  
Make you servant of his ban.

And his dreams are not far distant  
Dear old stream he will at length  
With his craft and with his cunning  
Harness up your mighty strength.

Not unlike the beast of burden,  
Groaning under yoke of pain,  
You will toil and you will labor  
For his comfort and his gain.

Yet as years roll by, dear river,  
And full penance you attain,  
Then in peace will flow forever,  
Flow in peace unto the main.



## Chapter X

### BEFORE RADIO AND TV

What kind of recreation did they have between 1890 and 1920? When people worked as hard as the early settlers did was there any time for fun? What did people do for entertainment before radio and TV, before talking movies, motels and automobile trips? In 1920 radio was just over the horizon, silent movies were quite new, the first talking pictures were still seven years in the future, and TV was science fiction. What was there to *do*?

The answer was, "Plenty."

Hunting and fishing were no longer a necessity; game and fish were still abundant. As one retiree of the time said when he returned to work, "It wasn't that I was tired of fishing but I was tired of trying to give away the fish." A lodge which planned a duck dinner sent two members to Telegraph Slough for an afternoon and they brought back 150 ducks. The regulations governing deer and bear hunting were at first non-existent and later neither very restrictive nor rigidly enforced.

Towns had no parks yet but the country was close to everyone and quite unspoiled — salt water beaches near Anacortes, LaConner, Bay View, Edison, and Samish; the sandbars of the Skagit River for every town along its banks; Bottomless Lake for Sedro Woolley boys and Lake Ten on its mountaintop for Mount Vernonites to explore; the lovely chain of lakes from Clear Lake south to the county line for all who lived nearby; Grandy, Baker Lake, Lake Sixteen; the magnificent cedars and six-foot sword ferns of Carpenter's Creek. Beaches were not yet private. Berry pickers roamed freely over any lands where berries grew.

Edna Breazeale wrote of her early childhood on Bay View Ridge:

There were no herd laws and cows could roam over the Ridge grazing on the white clover which grew in abundance along the skidroads and roadsides. Wild vetch and peas grew, too. On the flat just below our home there were bogs where areas of wild violets grew. There were myriads of wild flowers to exult in — trillium, lady-slippers, Indian paint brush, wild roses of

two kinds (the larger ones and the tiny little ones), Solomon's seal, wild currant, dogwood, Johnny-jump-ups, tiger lilies, false Solomon's seal, pussy willows, mimulus which grew down by the base of the ridge near the beach where springs made a marshy place. . . .

Wild blackberries were festooned over every stump and log. What a delight it was to sit down in a patch of sweet white clover, munch on wild blackberries, and watch a mother bobwhite with her bevy of little ones like little brown puff balls.

On the beach and in the tidal pools there were infinite treasures — fingerling trout and salmon swam close to shore and one could go fishing in Joe Leary Slough, little sticklebacks came in to shore, crabs of several kinds, herrings.

A favorite summer vacation was going camping; it gave an opportunity to explore and enjoy a beauty spot at a more leisurely pace than was possible on a picnic. March's Point, Samish Island, Bay View, and Rosario were very popular, but there were other sites to which families returned year after year, such as Holmes Harbor.

Campers reached their chosen site by whatever means was available. Springless farm wagons were the slowest and least comfortable but made it possible to carry a great deal of camping equipment. A hay rack spread with sweet smelling hay gave some padding to the ride; it was most popular with young people who enjoyed being thrown together in heaps by the pot holes in the road. Carriages or spring wagons could be used. With the horse-drawn vehicles someone needed to take the horses home after the camp was set up — nobody wanted to take care of horses while on a camping vacation. Some people took pack trips into the mountains, sometimes backpacking, sometimes with a rented pack pony. The most comfortable way to reach a camp site at any of the beaches or islands was by boat — many people in Anacortes and increasing numbers along the river owned gasoline launches.

When a camp was set up for a week or more it usually included sleeping tents and a tarpaulin





The Hartsons' camp at Rosario about 1895. The framework in the right foreground of the picture would support a tarpaulin over the cooking and dining area in case of rain.

*Skagit County  
Historical Museum*

Camping at March's Point in the early part of the century. This is camping de luxe with a genuine stove for cooking and actual chairs to sit on. The two young women are Maggie Gabrielson Benedict and her friend, Edna Cotton.

*Picture from  
Margaret Benedict Southwick*



Anacortes camping party in the early 1900s.

*From the collection of  
Wallie Funk*





The Will Dunlap camp at Rosario about 1900

*Picture from P. H. Dunlap*

to shelter the cooking and eating area. The stove might be an old circular saw set up on rocks or perhaps even a genuine stove. The fuel was always wood—all the beaches offered an abundance of dry wood from the trees and brush washed down the streams in flood and then stranded by storms and tides, and from the logs and shingle bolts which escaped on their way to the mills; with apparently inexhaustible forests it then seemed easier to cut new ones than to gather timbers which strayed. Kerosene lanterns furnished the light for the camp, usually supplemented by a huge evening campfire around which people told stories, sang songs, and toasted marshmallows. Paul Bunyan tales were current around these fires as well as in the logging camps and stories of Ben Ure, Pirate Kelly, and smuggled Chinese were especially vivid within the circle of firelight with waves lapping or pounding nearby.

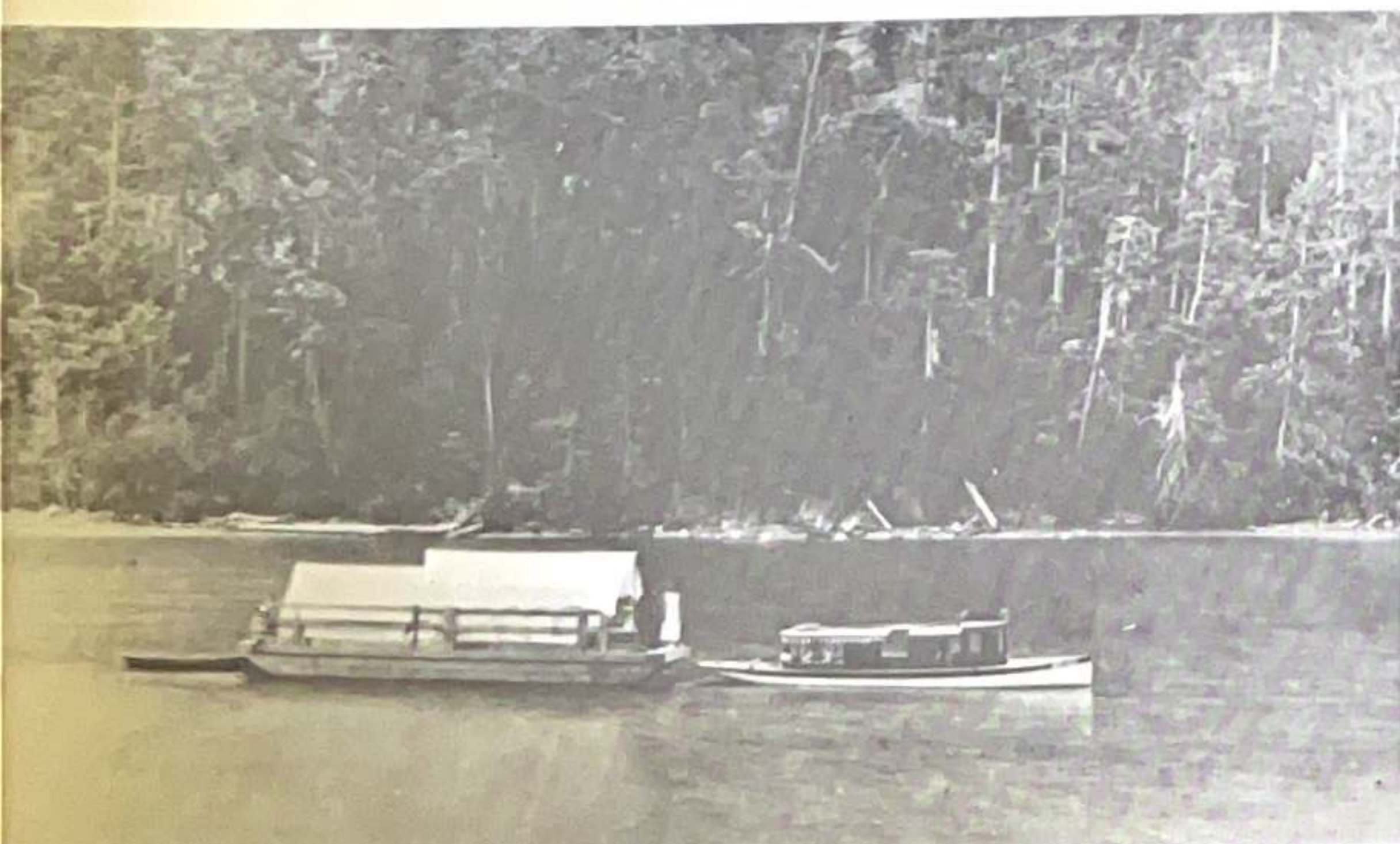
While probably only a small part of the population made camping trips, practically everyone

went on picnics. Churches, schools, clubs, lodges, and the Pioneer Association held picnics. Single families took their baskets of food to the woods, the creeks, the lakes, the sandbars, or a beach within walking distance or a short ride away. A family reunion generally meant a picnic. The Fourth of July every year brought dozens of picnics with patriotic speeches, games, prizes, and band music. The celebrations at Anacortes and Sedro Woolley were especially famous with excursion boats, trains, and interurban cars gathering up the crowds from all over the county who did not happen to have a local celebration of their own.

Gasoline launches, hayracks, carriages, and after 1910, Model T Fords and other cars carried picnickers to the spots too distant to be reached on foot; up to 1920 there was no shortage of picnic and camping spots for everyone. Two thousand members of the Pioneer Association gathered at Weaverling Spit for picnics in 1914 and 1920. Gage's Point, Cap Sante, Samish Island, Carpenter's

Going camping around 1915. After the spring farm work was done, tents were put on scows which were towed by launches to some nearby beach. The destination of this trip was Lottie's Bay.

*Picture from Herbert D. Bessner*



The Bessner camp at Lottie's Bay separated from Bowman's Bay by the sand-spit in the picture. The sleeping tents were on the scow; the tent on shore was the diner where food was prepared and served.

*Picture from Herbert D. Bessner*







Indian camp at Judge Power's hop ranch about 1900. The two lines of men are playing the bone game, a favorite gambling game among the Indians.

*Picture from P. H. Dunlap*

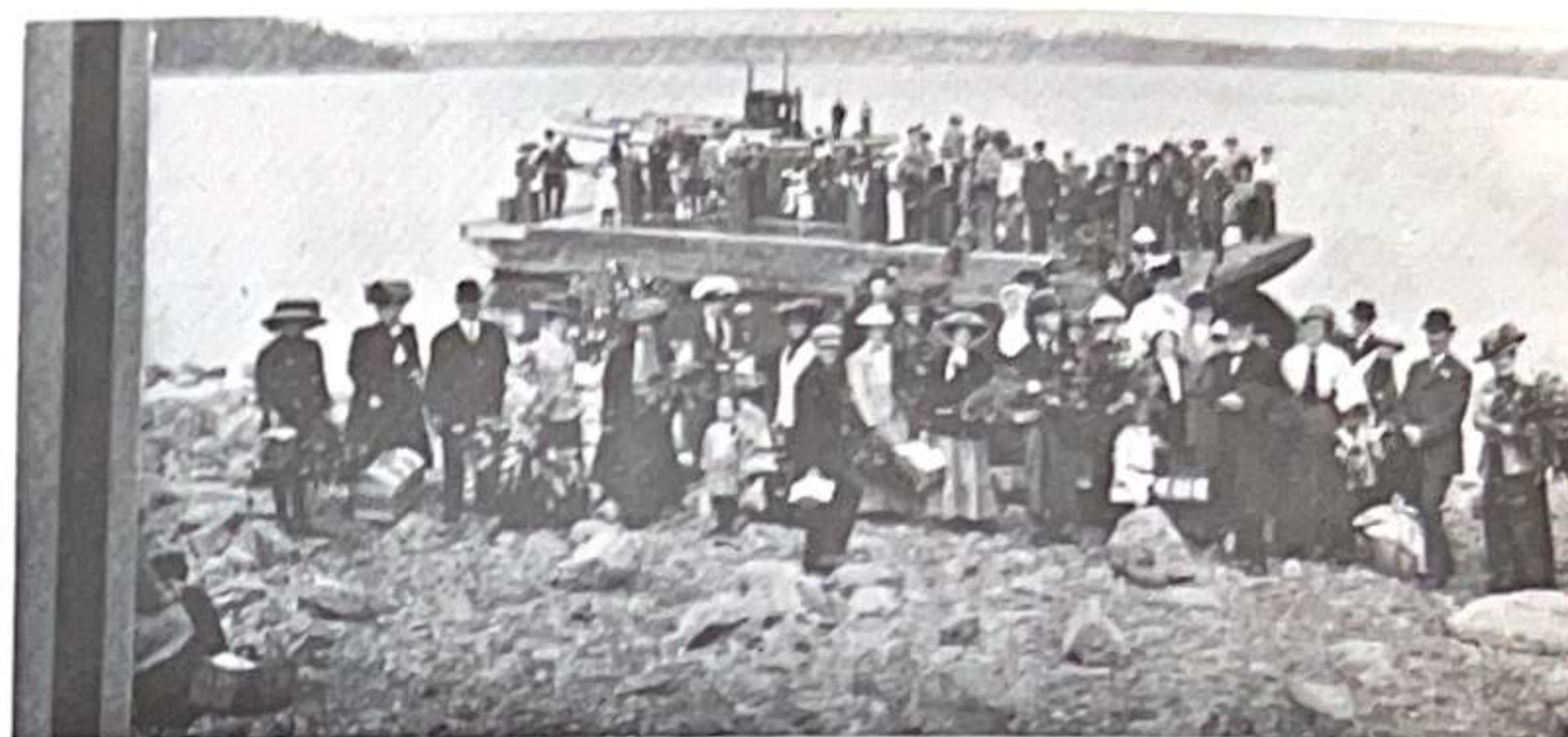
Creek, Rosario might be privately owned but there were still no fences, gates, or NO TRESPASSING signs.

Excursions on the sternwheelers were glorified mass picnics. The Skagit Queen, the Josephine, the Gleaner, and a few other steamers would interrupt their summer schedules for day-long trips to interesting places — to see a fish trap raised, to visit Still's Park, to spend several hours at Utsaladdy or Rosario, or to go from the lower river towns to Sedro Woolley on the Fourth.

An increasing number of families owned gasoline-powered boats which they kept moored to their own floating docks in the river or at the salt water ports of the county. These gave an added opportunity for picnicking, hunting, fishing, and camping, or for longer trips into the fiords of British Columbia. Boat owners in LaConner, Anacortes, Blanchard, and Samish Island had the advan-

Crowd gathers at the dock in Anacortes to watch the Indian canoe races; date uncertain.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

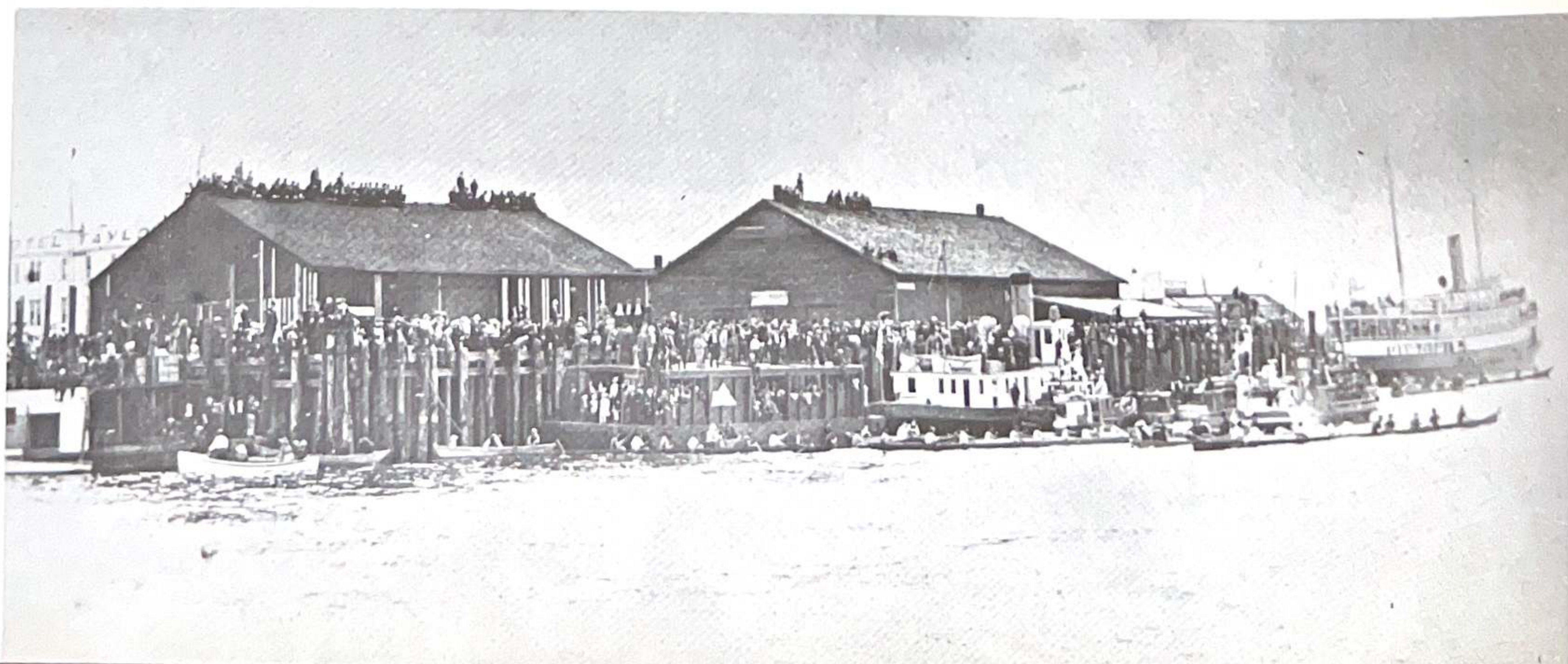


W. V. Wells promoted picnics from Anacortes to Cyprus Island for a number of years. Above, the picnickers return with bouquets of rhododendrons which do not grow wild on Fidalgo Island.

*From: Anacortes Museum of History and Art*

Below, W. V. Wells' annual picnic for school teachers and their families.

*From: Anacortes Museum of History and Art*





The Skagit Queen on an excursion to Rosario. A long gang-plank was put down to the beach for the passengers. The five logs from the bank to the beach are the remains of the log chute built years earlier when the area was being logged off. The Sharpe house is almost on the horizon at the upper left.

*Picture from  
Les Finsen*



The sternwheeler, Skagit Queen, leaving Rosario about 1905 to return her excursion passengers to Milltown, Skagit City, Mount Vernon, and Avon, the usual collection points for excursions down the Skagit River to the Sound.

*From the collection of  
Walie Funk*

Houseboat camping out of Anacortes about 1910. The launch Echo, in the background of the picture furnished the motive power to get the barge to the desired spot.

*From the collection of  
Wallie Funk*







Picnic at Weaverling Spit,  
probably that of the Pioneer  
Association on Aug. 5, 1920.  
Picture from John Locken

*Best Verralls  
Frank Verrall  
Claude Verralls  
The Hanley  
Lila & Harold  
Benjamin was  
there May  
Helena, Flora  
Elsie, Rudy &  
Emily.*

*Berts Ford*

Rexville picnic at North Fork  
bridge in 1912. People, l to r:  
1, Nels Hendrickson, LaCon-  
ner; 2, Lawrence Larson, Rex-  
ville; 3, Ed Mundson, LaCon-  
ner; 4, Elmer "Jim" Larson,  
Rexville; 5, Mrs. Nels Hend-  
rickson, LaConner; 6, Mrs.  
Nels Larson (Hilda); Rexville;  
7, Nels Larson, Rexville; 8,  
Frank Anderson, LaConner;  
9, (boy sitting in front) Willard  
Larson, Rexville.

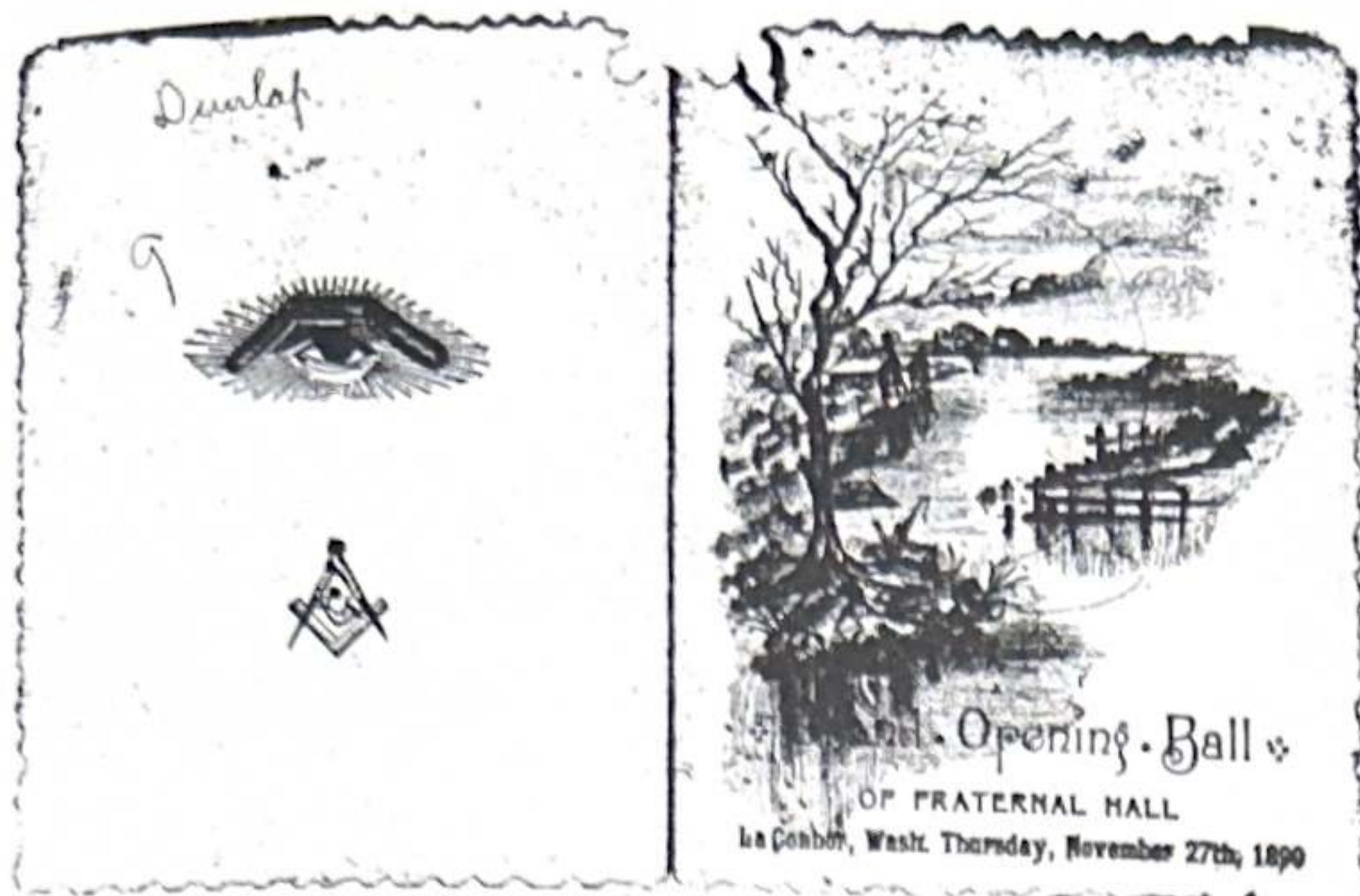
*Picture from  
Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Axelson*



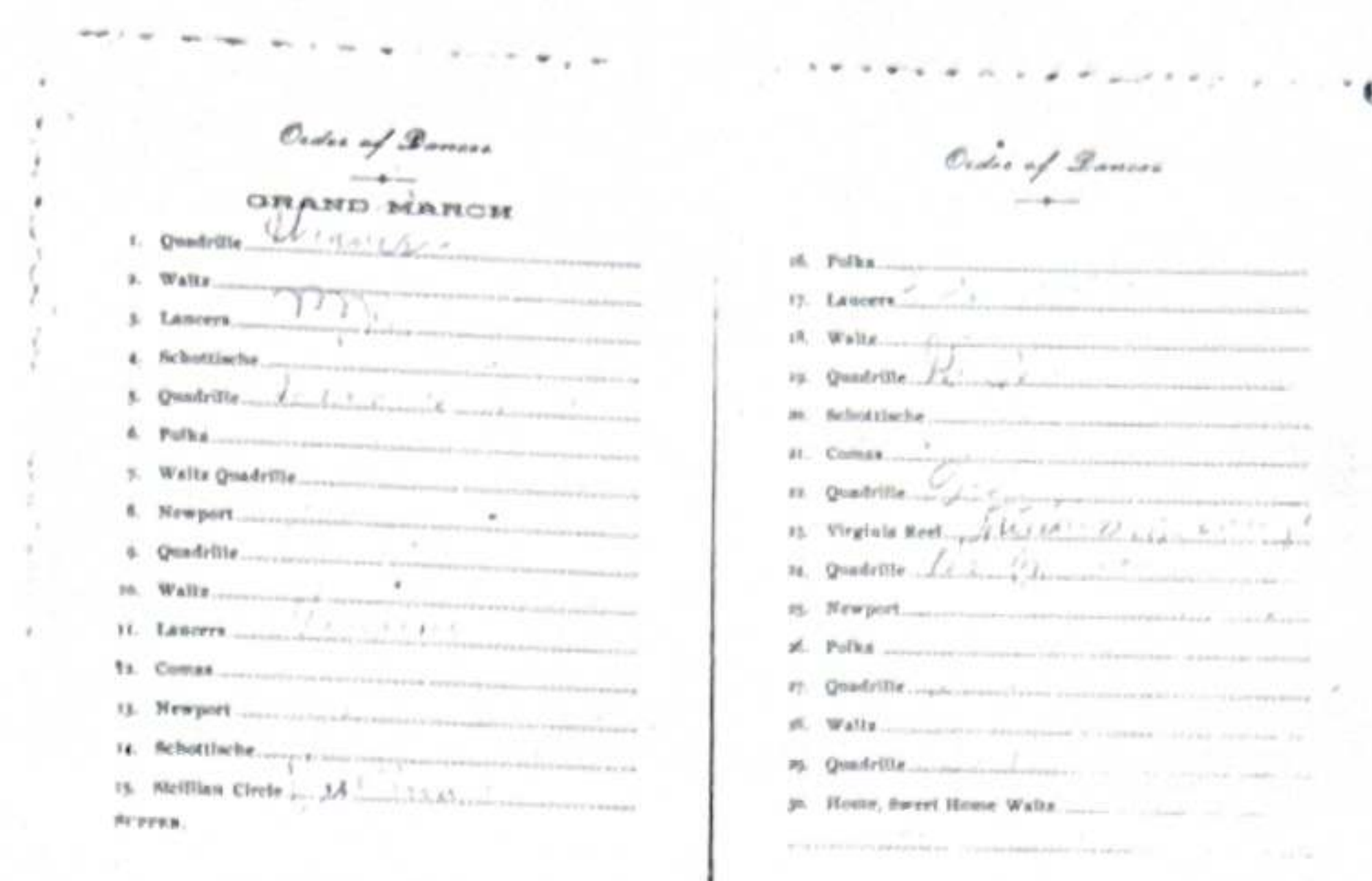
An excursion car of the early  
1900s near Anacortes — no  
doors, no windshield, no hood,  
solid rubber tires and a crank  
in front. The engine seems to  
be under the double front seat.

*From the collection of  
Wallie Funk*





Front and back of the program of the Grand Opening Ball of the Fraternal Hall in LaConner, Nov. 27, 1890. Program in the possession of P. H. Dunlap



Inside pages of the program of the Grand Opening Ball at the Fraternal Hall in LaConner, Nov. 27, 1890. The kinds and numbers of the dances are interesting. Program in the possession of P. H. Dunlap

tage over those on the river as they did not have to wait for high tide to start their trips. New operators from the Skagit, wishing an early start, often ran aground on a river sandbar and had to wait for the tide to come in to free the boat. There was enough silt in Swinomish Channel and at Blanchard to demand experienced navigation to avoid grounding.

Dancing had been a favorite social activity from the beginning of settlement when the chechacos finished off their communal barn-raising with a supper and a barn dance late into the night. LaConner dedicated Fraternal Hall in 1890 with a formal dance with a printed dance program. Every Christmastime for years there was a Masked Ball at the Opera House in Mount Vernon. Most dances in the lodge halls, opera houses, community and Grange halls, and dance halls all over the county were informal family affairs which the



The Anacortes Opera House which hosted many road shows as well as productions by local talent. From the collection of Wallie Funk

Fourth of July picnic at Sauk in 1910. Picture from Mary Parks Larsen







Children's play always reflects the adult world of their time. In 1911, Lloyd and Lou Carlson made a "stump puller," building a fire in an old carbide can to represent their donkey engine; their wood for firing the donkey is in the foreground.

*Picture from Lou Carlson*

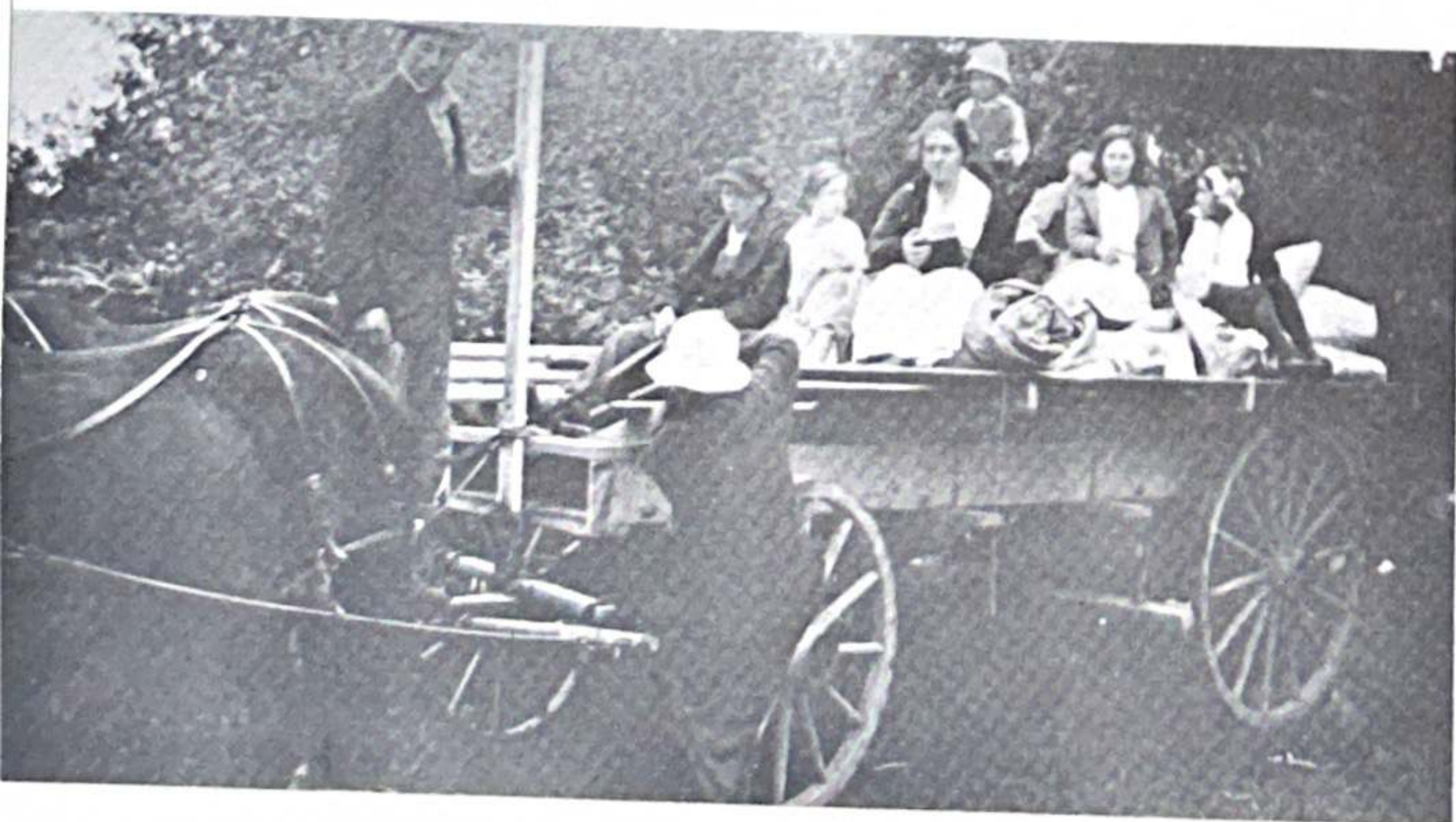
children attended with their parents, the infants parked on tables in the hall and fed or diapered by their mothers when they cried. Mount Vernon celebrated its first pavements with a street dance on First Street in October, 1911.

The Methodist and Baptist churches were opposed to dancing and card playing. Their protests against the pavement dance were unavailing and they could do nothing about the poker and other card games in the back rooms of pool halls and saloons, but their influence was enough to dampen dancing and card playing at the mixed parties which their young people attended.

There were plenty of other games, however. Some have vanished because the special conditions which made them possible have gone, others seem just to have disappeared with time as there is less

Kulshan Campfire group in 1916 starting off on a camping trip in a hayrack. The driver is Claude Davis, the woman climbing into the wagon Mrs. Helen Pope, group leader. In the wagon, l to r: Clement Davis, Achsah Gallacher, Helen Axelson, two unidentified boys, Vera Reay, Ethel Barth.

*Picture from Vera Reay Hedlund*



1900 at the Cornelius Pleasant Ridge home near La Conner. Left to right it shows Vera, Charles, John Arthur, and Philip Alvin Cornelius with their dog, Carlo, the bicycle, horse, cow and calf which made farm life so pleasant for children. Note the rail fences.

*Picture from Betty Cornelius Bowen*

## THE THRILLING DRAMA OF Bread on the Waters

—)—WILL BE GIVEN AT (—  
**Edison, Nov. 26, 1891**

—) IN THE (—  
**ODD FELLOWS HALL**  
**ADMISSION 50 CENTS.**

After the performance a **GRAND BALL** will be given  
Tickets, including Supper, \$1.50.

Advertisement of play and dance at Edison in 1891.  
*Picture from Fred Butler*

Kulshan Campfire group in 1916, organized by Mrs. Helen Pope. Besides the usual campfire work the group took camping trips and prepared a float for the Pow-Wow parade of 1916. Group l to r: Lillian Schroeder, Ethel Barth, Helen Ewing, Helen Axelson, Vera Reay, Helen Pope, Achsah Gallacher, Doris Barth.

*Picture from Vera Reay Hedlund*





need for children to create their own amusement, and others linger on, especially in smaller communities, in the self-perpetuating special world of childhood in which different age groups play together.

Anti-Hi-Over was a game which required only a rubber ball, four or more children divided into two teams, and a low house, barn, or shed with open spaces on both sides. The team having the ball threw it over the roof, screaming "Anti-hi-over" as a warning. If the other team caught it before it hit the ground they raced around the building to tag one or more of their opponents with it; anybody tagged had to join the team which caught him. If they did not catch the ball they returned it over the building with another shout of "Anti-hi-over." Who knows any buildings today where the game could be played without destructive results?

Children jumped rope, flew kites, played marbles and hop-sotch according to the season. They played baseball, statues, run-sheep-run, pump-pump-pullaway, duck-on-the-rock, hide-and-seek, crack the whip in all seasons. Whenever somebody had to be "it" a counting-out rhyme was used, the commonest, "Eenie-meenie-mynie-mo-catch-a-nigger-by-the-toe-if-he-hollers-let-him-go-eenie-meenie-mynie-mo-one-two-three-spells-out-goes-he." (This is still used at times but adults have managed to modify it to substitute "monkey" for "nigger.") Another counting-out rhyme ended, "Big-house-little-house-wood-shed-barn-one-two-three-spells-out-goes-he." (It is startling for one who has chanted these non-

sense words in his childhood in the State of Washington to visit New England and find the old farms with four attached structures, the big house, the little house, the woodshed, and the barn. Specialists, using such clues, have studied children's games and traced their continuity and variety over generations and wide areas.)

Where adults were organizing the games, as at parties or Fourth of July picnics, there were three-legged races, wheelbarrow races, or children in a circle trying to catch a greased pig which was trying equally hard to escape between their legs. For smaller children there were blind-man's-buff, London bridge is falling down, drop the handkerchief, pin the tail on the donkey.

At teen-age parties when dancing was not permitted many kinds of circle games were played — spelling games, guessing games, gossip where something was whispered from ear-to-ear around the circle to see how it had been garbled by the end. There were other more active games like spin the platter and musical chairs. Post office and other kissing games were always popular. Basket socials raised money for good causes — each girl packed a picnic dinner for two and decorated the box with fancy paper and ribbon. The young swains were not supposed to know which box came from a particular girl, but they had often been tipped off, so the bidding for certain boxes was lively; each ate supper with the girl whose box he bought.

Adults had their Granges and lodges. During the winter the Masons, Odd Fellows, Elks, Knights of Pythias, Maccabees, Woodmen, Red Men and

Maccabee Lodge in Anacortes about 1908. Center of middle row: Charles Beale. Back row, 1 to r: 3, K. Kamp-hout; 5, Axel Nelson; 6, C. Fisher. Rest unidentified.

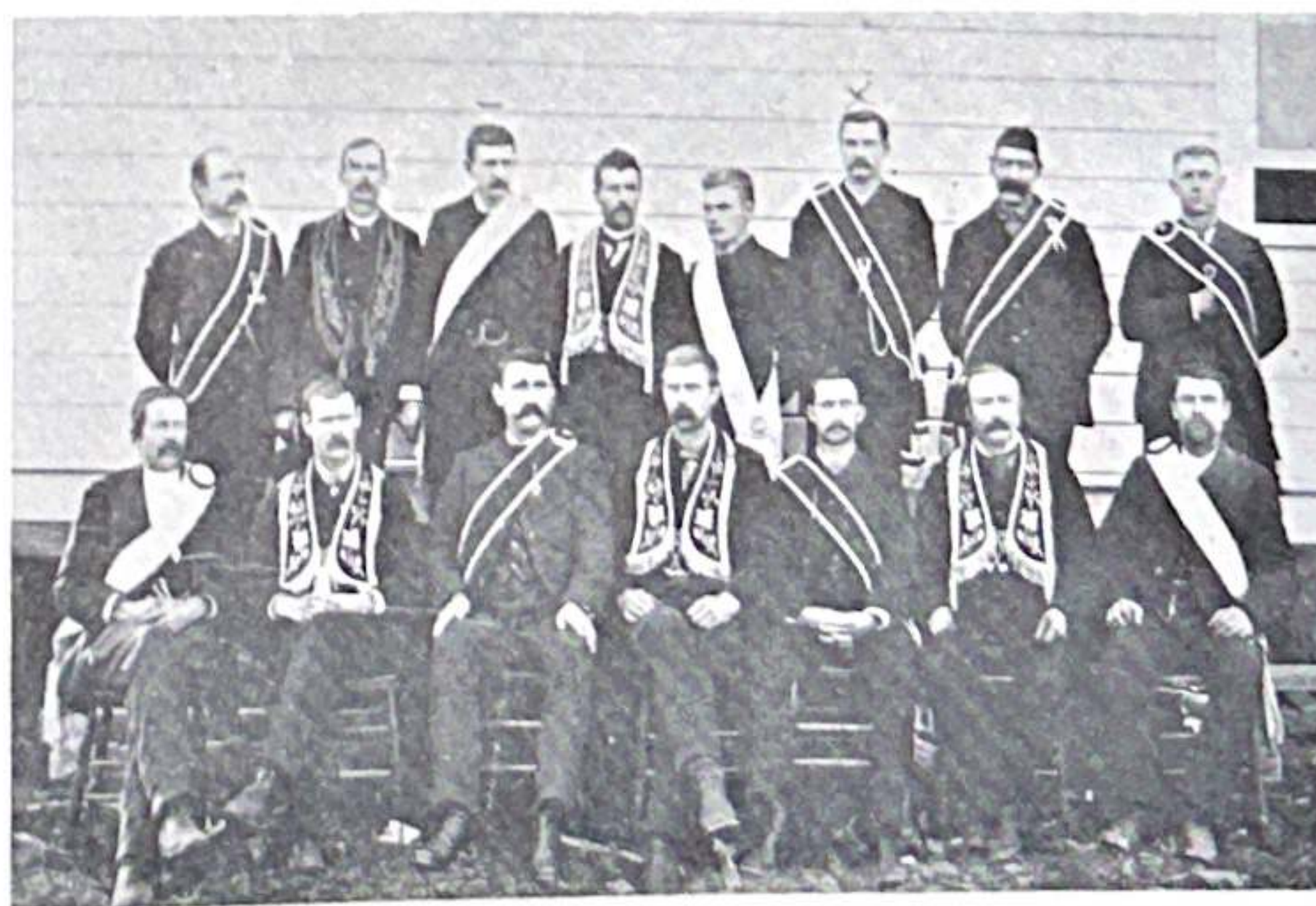
Picture from Mrs. Stanley Anderson



*Vernall*

Charter members of the Edison I.O.O.F. Lodge. They established a cemetery; the first burial was Amasiah Kalloch in 1889. Later the body of Ezekiel Hall, who died in 1888 and was buried at Prairie, was moved to this cemetery. The third man from the left in the back row is A. S. Howard and the sixth is his cousin, George Addington.

Picture from Frank Howard





their ladies auxiliaries met about once a week. After lodge meetings there were usually suppers, or people played cards, or the sons and daughters of members showed off their musical or declamatory talents, or the lodge band played. There were chapters in towns now almost forgotten and people traveled great distances to attend. One man used to walk from Lyman to Mount Vernon for Masonic meetings, and four Knights of Pythias traveled the same route by hand car on the railroad tracks, according to Pete Trueman. The Granges offered the same kind of fellowship in the rural areas, though they were based on agricultural interests and did not in any way exclude lodge membership.

The coming of the railroads in 1890 ushered in the era of the traveling road shows which were in their heyday until competition from silent movies after 1910 began to cut into their audiences. All the towns of the county were equipped to play



Esther Rebekah Lodge No. 32, LaConner. Drill team about 1913. Bottom row, l to r: 1, Mrs. Ida Pearson; 2, Mrs. Ina Wells Nelson; 3, Mrs. Helen Peth Mayhugh; 4, Mrs. Hazel Rawlins Lockhart. Second row, l to r: 1, Mrs. Minnie Gallacher Waugh; 2, Mrs. Cornelius; 3, Mrs. D. B. Hall; 4, Mrs. John Chilberg; 6, Mrs. D. W. Allen. Third row, l to r: 1, Mrs. Seagrum; 2, Mrs. Cora Jennings; 3, Mrs. Agnes Savage; 4, Mrs. Leona Vaughn; 5, Miss Rhoda Chambers; 6, Mrs. Mabel Misner; 7, Miss Grace Martin. Fourth row, l to r: Mrs. Ethel Farrand; 2, Mrs. Minnie Dunlap. *Picture from Erma Dunlap Ring*

The Rose Theater in Anacortes decorated for the Fourth of July festivities. *From the collection of Wallie Funk*



host to them after a fashion; Edison in Odd Fellows Hall, LaConner in Fraternal Hall, Anacortes, Burlington, Sedro Woolley, and Mount Vernon in opera houses, and Concrete in a nickelodeon movie theater. A musical comedy, "Busy Izzy," played there for one night more or less by accident and the manager of the show, Frank Whitbeck, has left us a description which would not differ too much from other locations. After a week in Seattle the musical was scheduled for a one night stand in Bellingham, but when the booking agent called for confirmation he learned that there had been a fire in the switchboard and the show was cancelled. The agent told Whitbeck not to worry, that he could put him in at Concrete and there would be no risk since the theater manager would buy the show. Whitbeck tells the story.

Concrete? Was there such a town? I had never heard of it . . . where and what was it? . . .

During the season we had played in some strange buildings that passed for theaters. I had met some fast hustlers out to make a quick buck and they didn't care about the way they made it . . . legitimate businessmen who were having fun running a small town theater just for the chance of meeting show folks and pretty girls . . . real showmen who made their living and raised a family, sent their children to college on the profits of their small houses. The man from Concrete, C. D. Stickley, topped them all.

Concrete, I learned, was in the upper Skagit Valley. It was reached by a railroad spur that ran out of Sedro Woolley. It was lumber country but the principal industry was a cement company. . . . That's where the name of "Concrete" came from. Mr. Stickley said "Busy Izzy" would be the first musical comedy to play the town and he knew we'd do wonderful business . . . in fact, he would buy the show . . . pay \$900 for the night. I grabbed it . . . that was double the expenses of the day, including the railroad fare in and out of Concrete.

This was December, 1911.

A minute before, the train had been running through the woods . . . now it was jerked to a stop beside a wooden station . . . the sign said "Concrete" . . . this was it.

The troupe piled off the train . . . into mud up to their ankles. The wooden sidewalk started at the depot and led up a short street to the main stem. On the corner, the Whitney Hotel . . . diagonally up the street, the theater.

As I registered at the hotel our host, the theater manager, greeted me. He would take me to the theater . . . and what a theater. Five steps up to the lobby . . . a door in the center. A nickelodeon . . . capacity, all hard benches, 532. One center aisle . . . the benches ran right smack up to the side walls . . . a flat floor. We walked down the aisle and up on the stage, 20 feet wide,



11 feet deep. I stood on my tiptoes and touched the tormentors . . . about 10 feet was the height.

I asked Stickley if he knew how many people there were in the troupe . . . he said he had been promised twenty-eight . . . eight people and twenty chorus girls. I told him that was correct, and where would the people dress? He took me around the back drop and opened a door . . . steep steps led down and into the doorway of what looked like a warehouse. The man explained, "I fixed it up right nice, got a good wood-burning stove to keep it warm, water pitchers and bowls, some tables and looking glasses, and nails to hang the costumes on." With this kind of set up there would be a costume . . . there would be no change of costume. He asked if the girls wore tights . . . I told him no tights, but in a bellboy number the girls wore black stockings and very short pants. That was it . . . use them in both acts. Now the girls had been taken care of, where would the principals, the ladies and gentlemen of the company, dress? That, too, was taken care of, they would dress in the office of the Mayor, it was only five doors down the street. That's what they did.

Finished with the stage, we walked back up the aisle and then I noticed the balcony. Up over the box office and the projection booth. It was built on the order of a hay mow in a barn. It, too, had hard benches, two of them. A step ladder stood on the floor. He said, "It's for kids . . . we let them in first . . . if they ain't too fat I can get fifteen in. We put 'em in and then take away the step ladder."

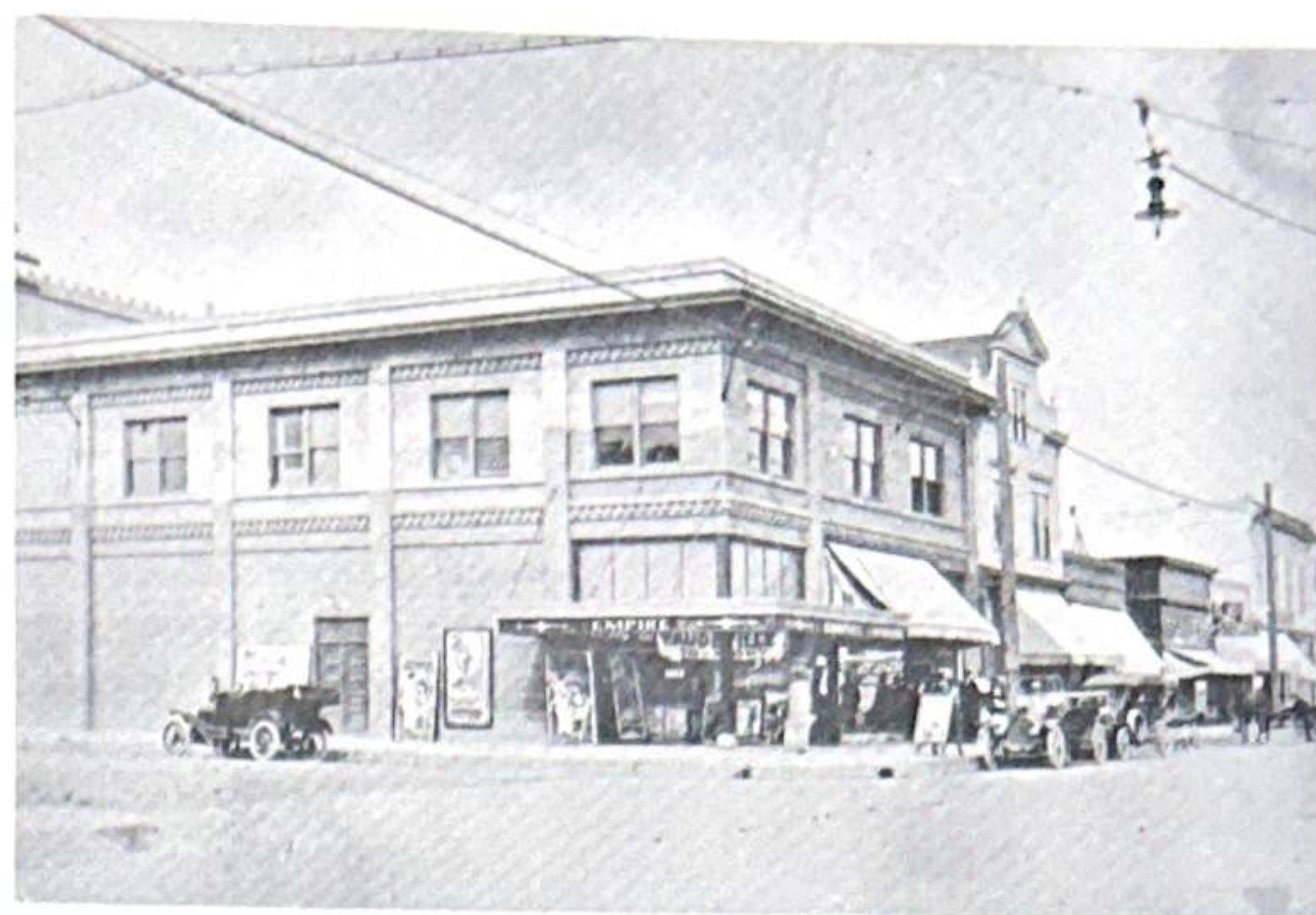
One narrow aisle. Benches to the side walls. Kids cooped in a balcony that had no escape. Nice situation in case of trouble during a performance.

Later Stickley took me for a walk to see Concrete. It took all of five minutes. Up one side of the main street, down the other. I counted fourteen saloons and one grocery store. Then I got the bad news . . . the population of Concrete was 650.

Six hundred fifty people to pay \$900 at the box office? This didn't look kosher. I told the man so. He just laughed. "Don't worry," he said, "we're sold out for tonight. Come over to the bank and I'll give you the money, half of it right now and the rest after the first act."

The quick dusk of the Northwest passed into night. It was an hour before show time. I stood in front of the theater looking out toward the hills at either end of the short street. There was a moon, it looked unreal, almost eerie. Lights were bobbing in the darkness; they looked like fireflies in a Florida swamp. I asked a native about it. "Oh, them lights . . . that's the folks coming out'n the hills with their lanterns. Ain't many roads, so the folks just come through the woods. Folks from the cement plant, the lumber camps and the shingle factory. They're all coming to see the operry . . . just scads of 'em."

They came . . . they filled every inch of the



The Empire Theater in Anacortes about 1910 when movies were new and vaudeville was still a major part of the theater program.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

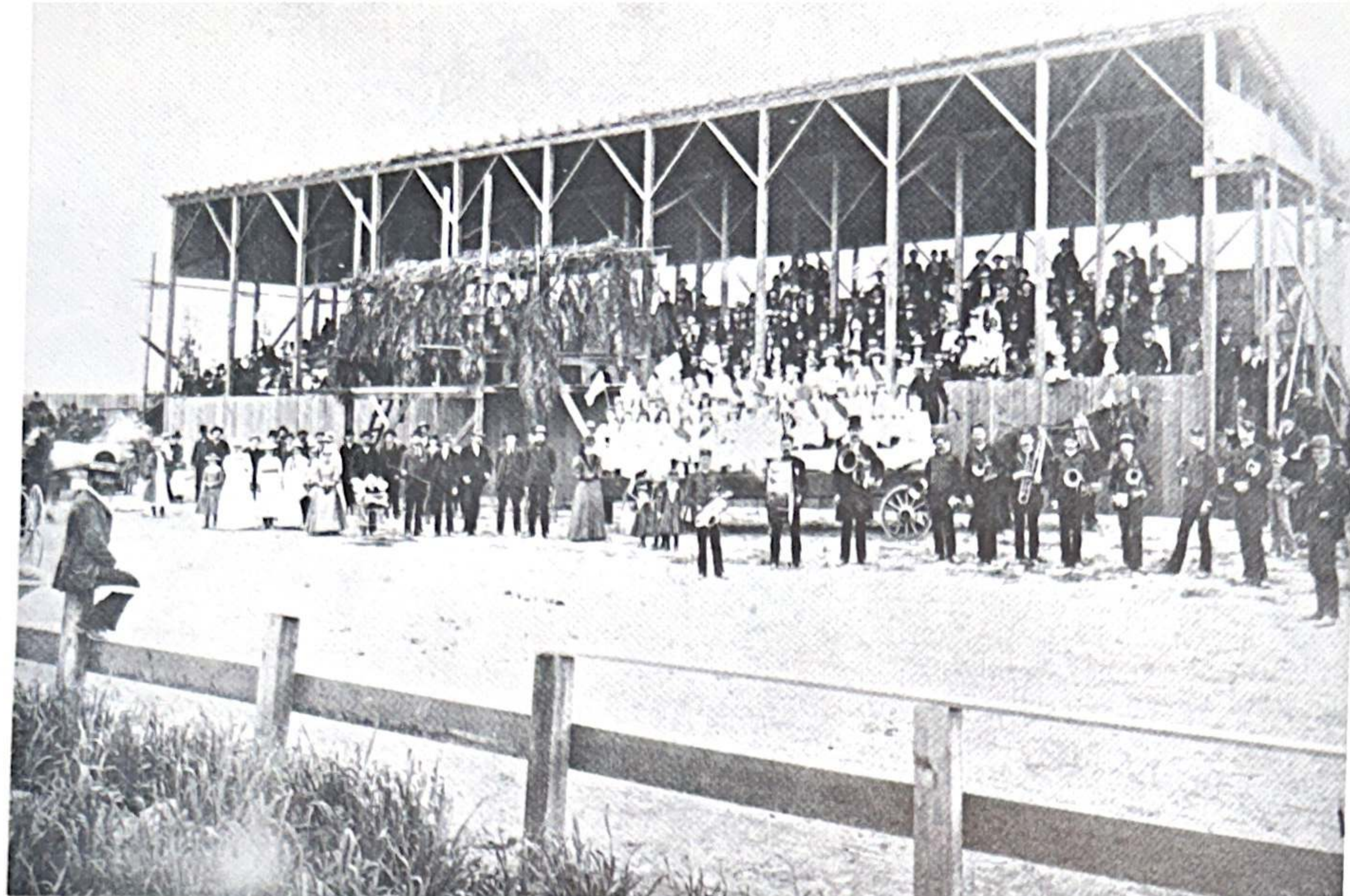
little theater . . . they stood in the aisles. The late comers pushed the folks that had found seats together until they were packed like sardines in a can. What an audience! They laughed, they howled with glee over every stale joke and gag. Carrie Weber, the prima donna, never sang better and never got so much applause. George Sidney, good troupier that he was, gave the best show of his career. I honestly believe the troupe had more fun playing that one night stand in Concrete than the entertainment-starved natives had.

The road shows traveled by train, sometimes if the troupe was large, in their own Pullman sleepers, an arrangement which avoided the expense of hotels and the rigors and uncertainties of accommodations in small towns. Minstrel shows, jubilee singers, melodrama, and vaudeville were common. The Buster Brown Shoe Company, which sold children's shoes, had a dwarf who made the rounds every year from about 1905 to 1915 putting on a show. Promoters came to town with plays for children in which local tots were recruited for walk-on parts as fairies, elves, or butterflies, thus guaranteeing an audience of relatives and friends.

Local citizens in some of the towns, concerned about the quality of many of the shows, banded together to bring Lyceum Series attractions, such things as magic shows, bell ringers, musicians, and an occasional lecture. After 1910 summer tent Chautauquas were brought to Edison, Mount Vernon, and Anacortes, offering up to a solid week of morning, afternoon, and evening music, plays, lectures, and entertainment which created much excitement among many children and adults.

The circus, too, came in the summer, the Al G. Barnes Wild Animal Circus. It was during its 1922 visit to Sedro Woolley that the performer,



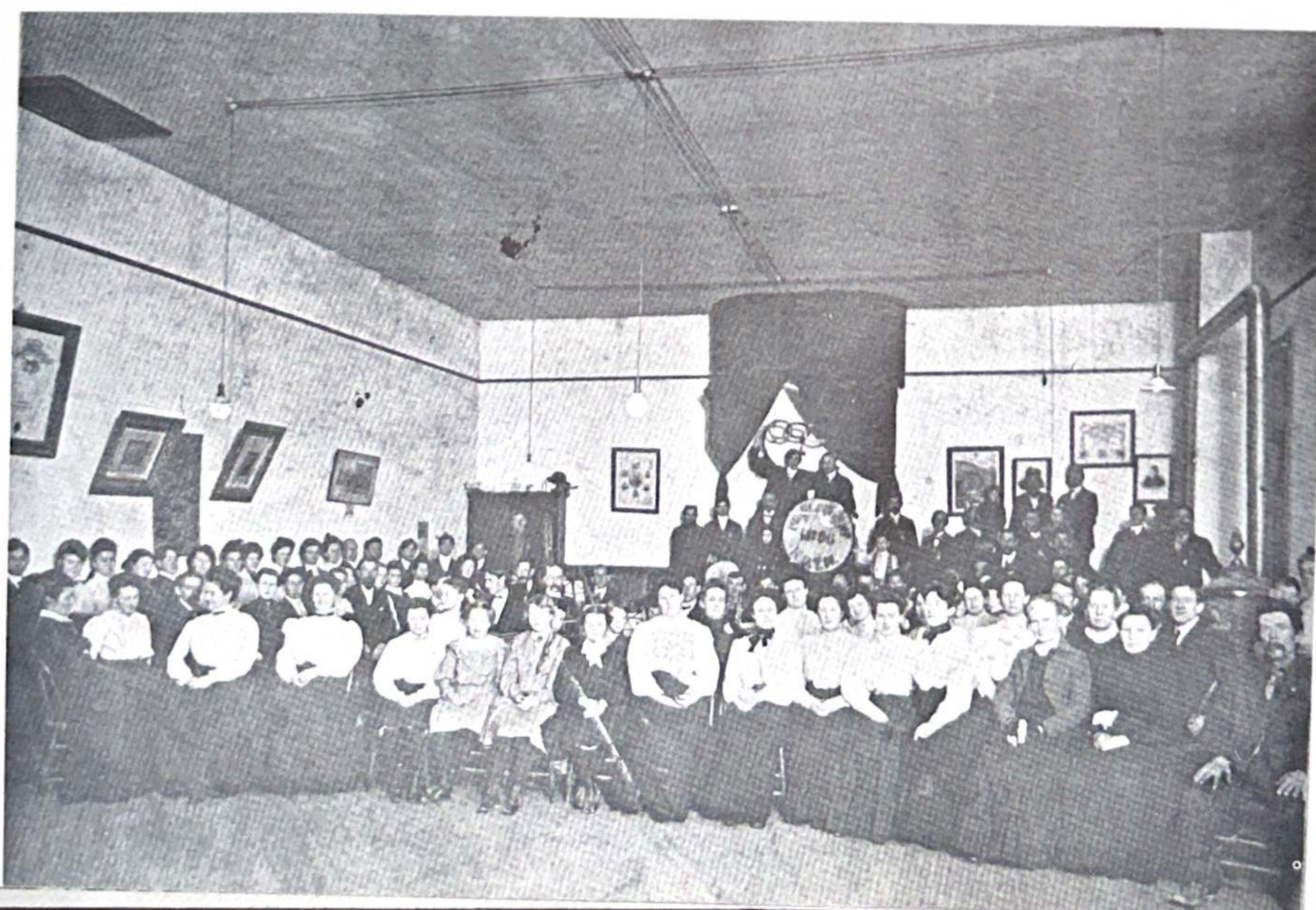
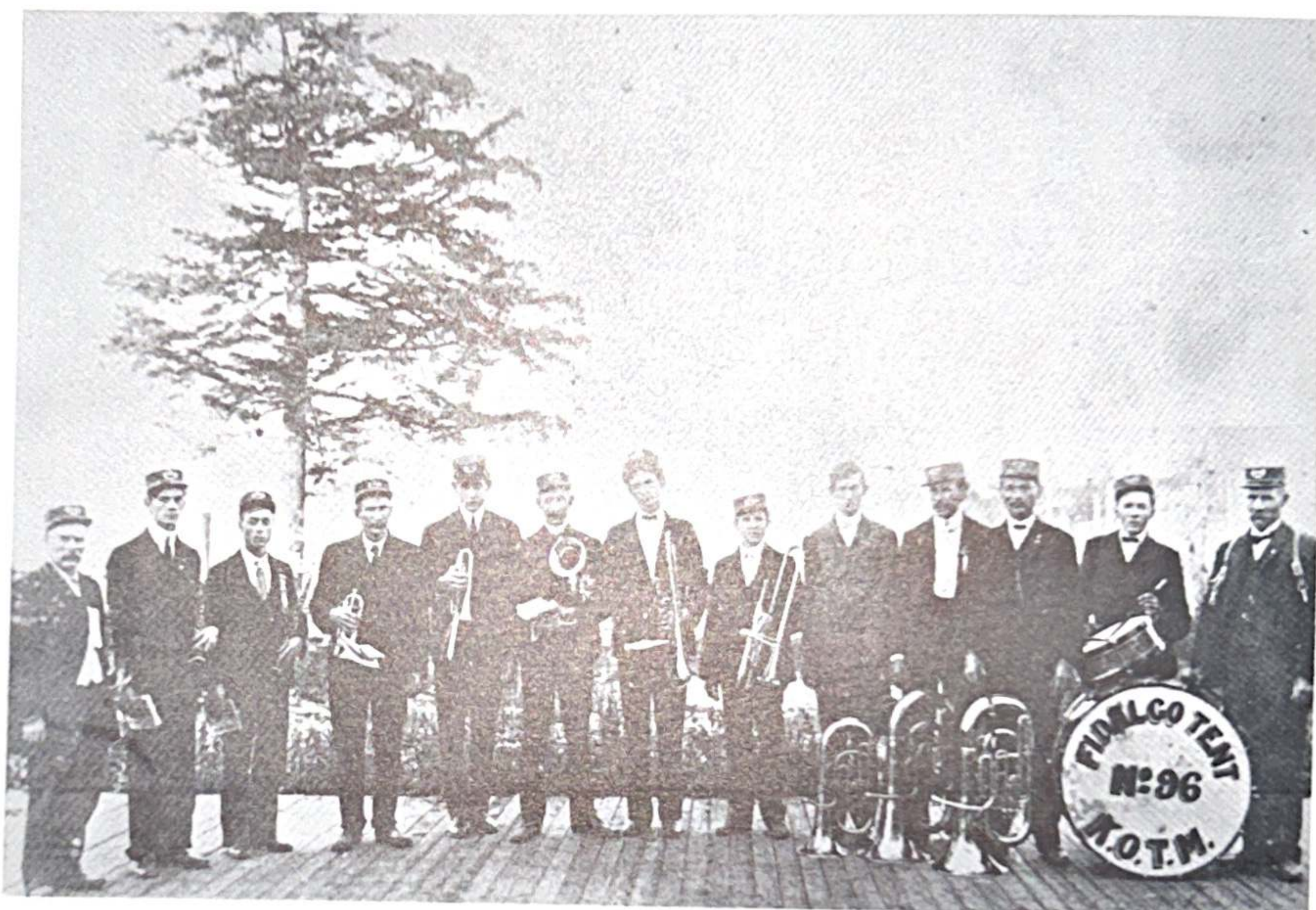


The grandstand at La Conner about 1890 decorated for some kind of celebration. The platform draped with cedar boughs is the speakers' platform. To the right is the band which was a part of every celebration.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

Band of Fidalgo Tent No. 96, Knights of the Macca-bees about 1911. Only men identified are Jesse Smith, 5th from the left, and Mr. Beale, third from right.

*Picture from Bill Beale*



Fidalgo Tent No. 96, Knights of the Mac-cabees, with their wives and children in the early 1900s.

*Picture from Mrs. Stanley Anderson*



billed as "Tusko, the largest elephant in captivity," escaped his keepers one day, roamed over the town for an evening, terrorizing the inhabitants, and brought himself and Sedro Woolley national publicity in the most unexpected and exciting circus performance in local history.

As high schools were established, first in LaConner in 1894, and around the turn of the century in Burlington, Edison, Anacortes, Sedro Woolley, Hamilton, Concrete, and Mount Vernon, they began giving plays. Shakespeare, in a safely censored version, was the early favorite since his plays escaped some of the church opposition to theater, but as time went on the schools gave more light comedies, titles which were never heard of in literary history. The chief requirements were that the play should have no profanity, no drinking, no smoking, and no suggestive situations. Since such standards were nationwide the publishers of high school plays offered a range of sanitized crowd-pleasers.

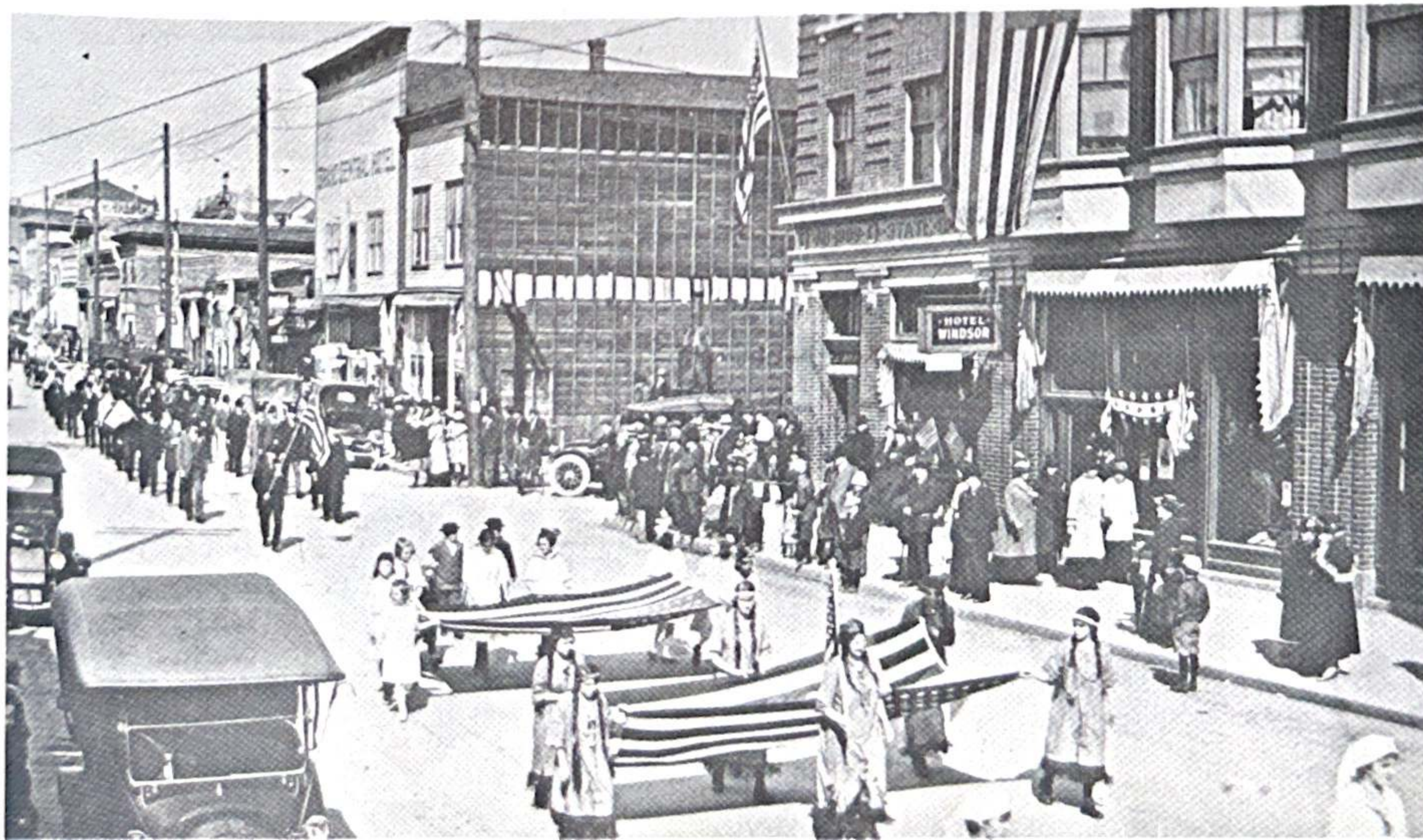
To a large extent people made their own music. Granges, lodges, and clubs had bands which

played to appreciative audiences at meetings, Fourth of July celebrations, Memorial Day parades, and other public functions. There were well-known fiddlers and accordionists and small musical groups that furnished dance music at Hoogdal, Hickson, and innumerable Grange halls and opera houses where young people and families gathered for sociable Saturday nights. Many accomplished young ladies with a minimum of formal instruction played the piano by ear or by note. Sheet music sold very well and group singing of old favorites or current hits was a feature of many gatherings.

Phonographs, often called gramophones or Victrolas, were making their appearance in homes and public places more and more frequently by the late 1890s. Some played cylindrical records and some discs, but all had to be wound up for playing by means of a hand crank, and at first all had a horn for amplification. The Sears, Roebuck catalog of 1897 offers machines and classical records; that for 1908 shows more machines and has large numbers of popular songs at 18 and 21 cents. Both



Celebration in LaConner in 1915 at the dedication of the bridge over Swinomish Channel. The bridge can be seen at the top of the picture with two Indian racing canoes below it. On the street in the foreground is a tug-of-war between Swedes and Norwegians.  
*Picture from Grace Talin*



The United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917 and this Flag Parade and Public Pledge of Loyalty was held on April 11. Campfire girls are in the foreground. The men marching behind are probably veterans of the Spanish-American War.  
*Picture from Margaret Benedict Southwick*





Waiting for the Fourth of July parade at 6th and Commercial in 1898.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*



Anacortes Fourth of July celebration in 1912 continued at least through July 6 when this picture was taken. This seems to be a public wedding.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

instruments and records continued to improve during the whole period. By 1920 the disc record had triumphed over the cylinder and some of the great music of all time was available in Caruso recordings. The larger towns had music stores which sold pianos and other musical instruments, phonographs, records, player pianos and rolls, and sheet music. There were many piano tuners on call. Music was important business.

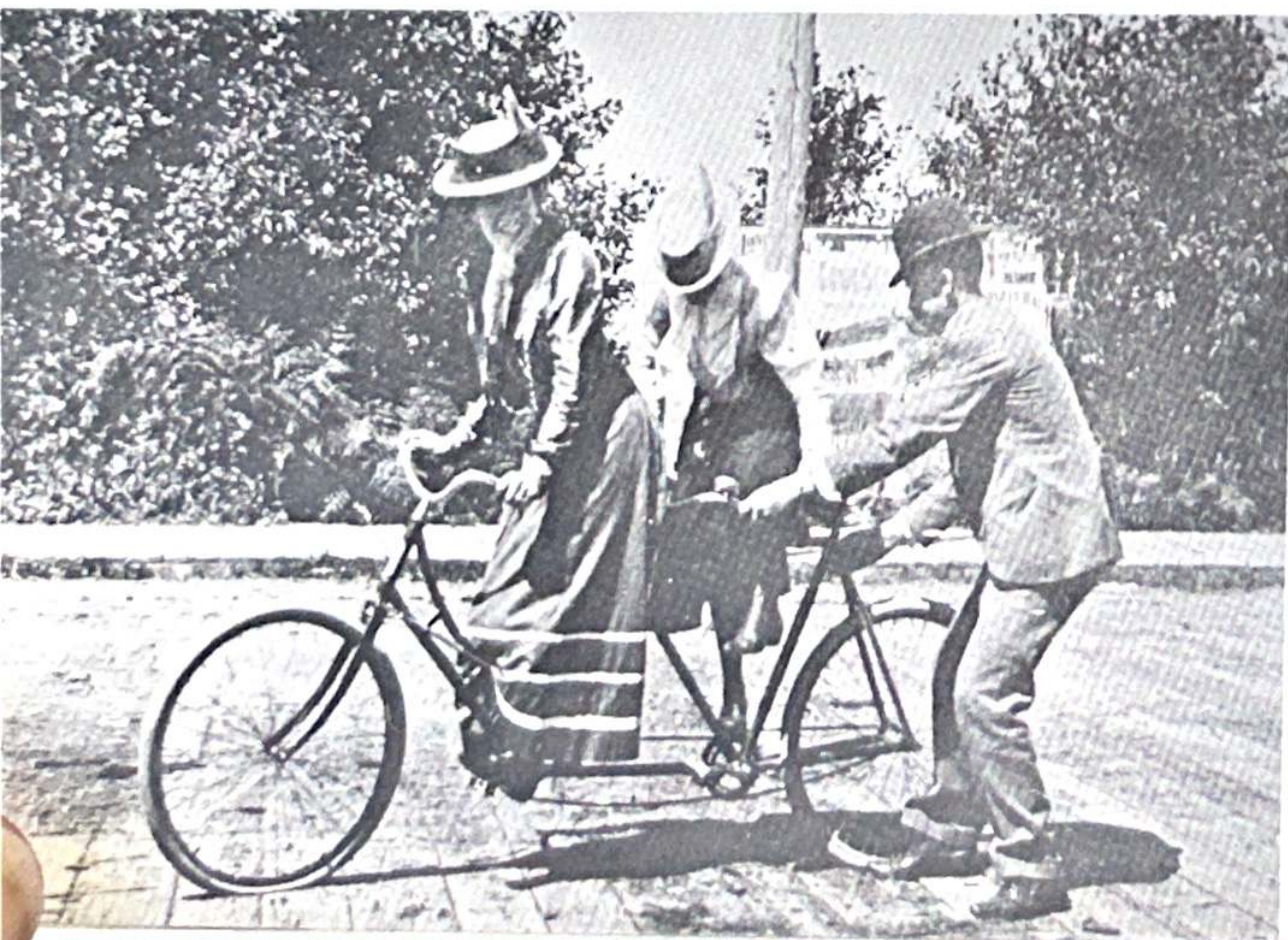
After 1905 movies were beginning as nickelodeons in many places. Alger Moberg, while still a senior in Mount Vernon High School, started the Bijou Theater on the west side of 2nd Street between Gates and Montgomery, open on Wednesday and Saturday nights to show two reels of silent film plus lantern slides and sing-alongs. Florence Anderson Stevens was the vocalist and Blanche Nelson Dickenson accompanied on the piano. When Moberg went to the University of Washington in the fall of 1908, he continued with the theater, arriving on the 7:00 P.M. train on show nights and returning to Seattle on the Owl. When the schedule became too strenuous he sold his the-

ater and its subsequent history is obscure. In 1909 the Rose Theater began its short life on Main Street. In 1910 the Pastime and the Rex Theaters opened on First Street, almost across from each other, and tried to attract customers by employing barkers until the city council put a stop to it.

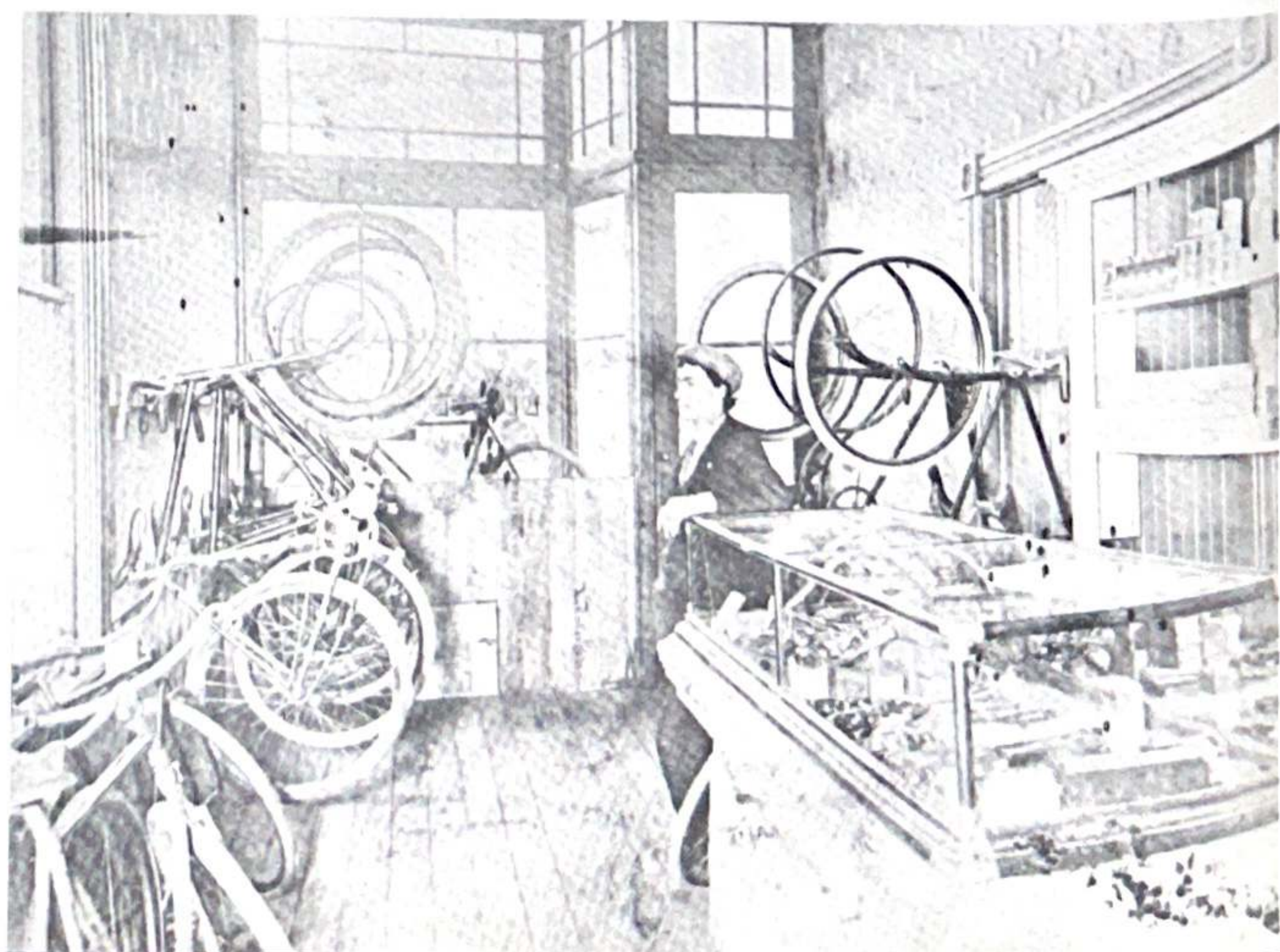
Anacortes had its Rose and Empire Theaters, the latter with a stage for vaudeville. The movie theaters which appeared in all the county towns after 1910, had to be used for a variety of purposes, since full-length pictures which told a story were not produced till after 1915. Two- and three-reel comedies were the staple of the early movies. After feature pictures began, the silent movies always had a musical accompaniment on the theater piano, played by a young girl who selected her music and modulated her playing to suit the mood of the picture, guided by a musical cue book which accompanied the film and by her own feelings. After 1915 and the arrival of the serials and the full-length pictures, admission prices rose to 10 cents, 15 cents, and even higher.

Sports always interested many people. LaCon-

Tandem bicycle on plank street around 1902 in Anacortes.  
*From the collection of Wallie Funk*



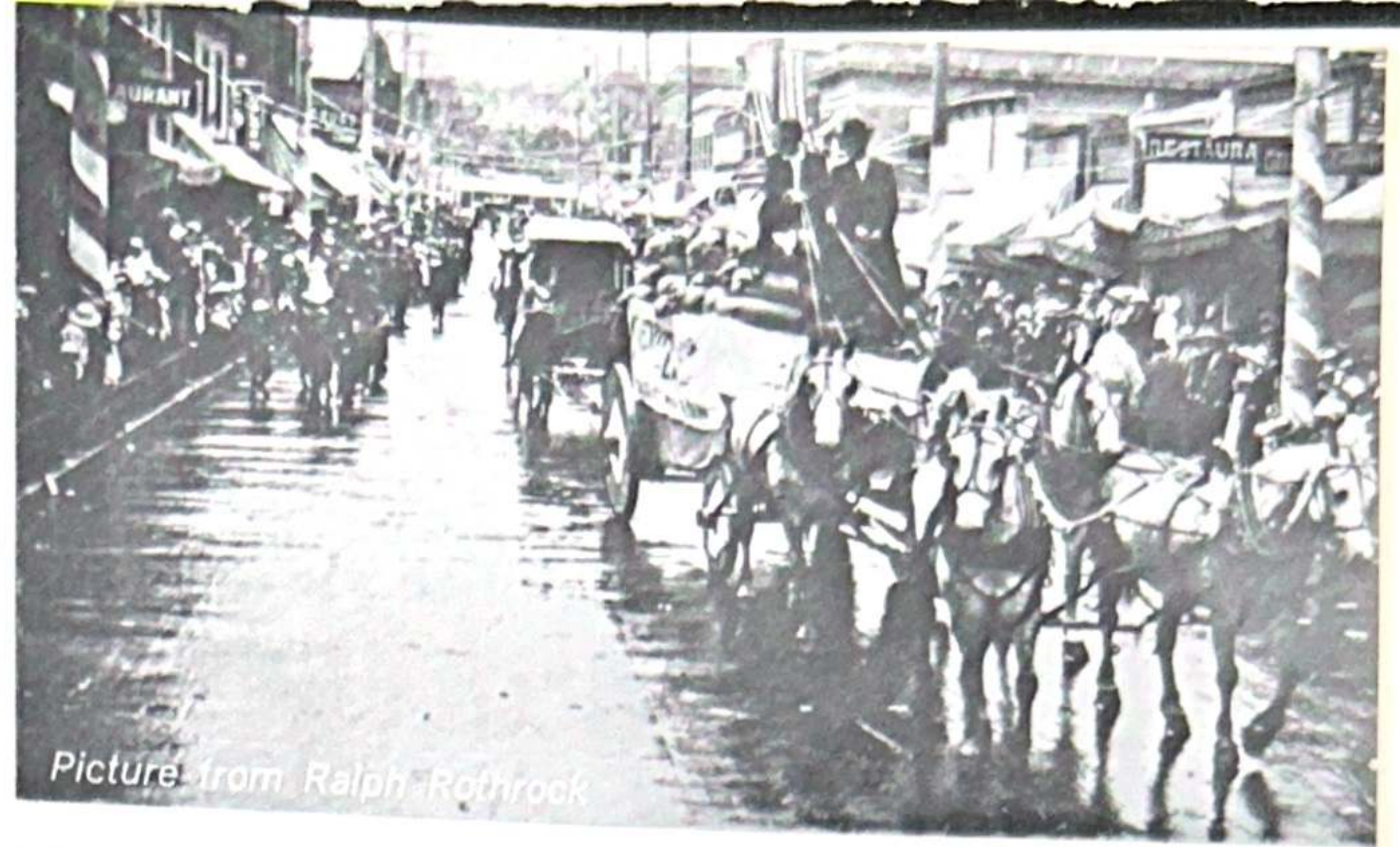
Ed Knapp's Bicycle Shop in Anacortes.  
*From the collection of Wallie Funk*







Skagit County Historical Museum from Sam Ball



Picture from Ralph Rothrock

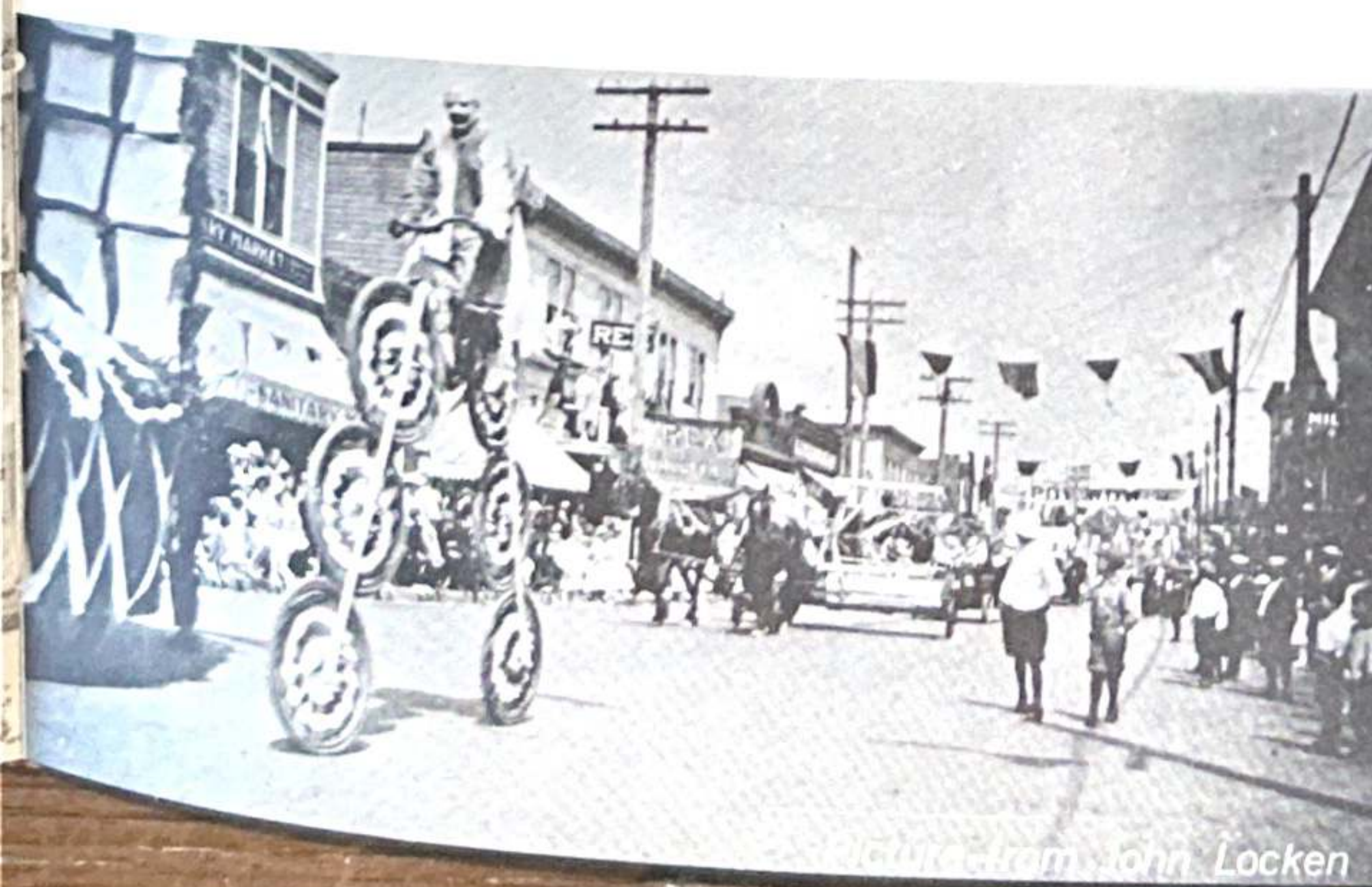


Picture from Ralph Rothrock

Pow-Wow, Mount Vernon.  
Upper right: Pow-Wow Day parade on First Street in Mount Vernon in 1912. The man with the reins on the load of oats is Ernest Rothrock.  
Bottom, left: Otha Fox riding the high wheel bike at a Pow-Wow parade.



Picture from Ralph Rothrock



Picture from John Locken



Picture from Margaret Benedict Southwick

ner had a race track where harness races were held regularly. Horse races were always a feature of the county fair. Men organized athletic teams to compete in baseball and target shooting. Schools that only went through the eighth grade often had teams that played other schools, and when four-year high schools began around the turn of the century, interscholastic competition became important for both boys and girls.

Basketball was played out of doors or in rented halls, tennis on makeshift courts, and field games on improvised athletic fields. Public interest in team sports generated pressure for gymnasiums and improved athletic fields which were being approved by voters in special levy and bond elections around 1920.

Beyond those cultural events available locally there was rich fare to be had in Seattle, a city readily and cheaply accessible by boat, by train, and after 1912 by stage and Interurban. Famous actors and actresses came to Seattle. Maude Adams played "Peter Pan" and "Chanticleer," David Warfield "Trelawny of the Wells." Maeterlinck's "Bluebird" came as did the famous production of "Ben Hur" in which the chariot race was enacted on stage by real horses and chariots on a treadmill. The operas "Faust" and "Carmen" were performed by very creditable professional companies. Mme. Schumann-Heink and other famous singers and musicians appeared in concert. While the total numbers from Skagit County who patronized such



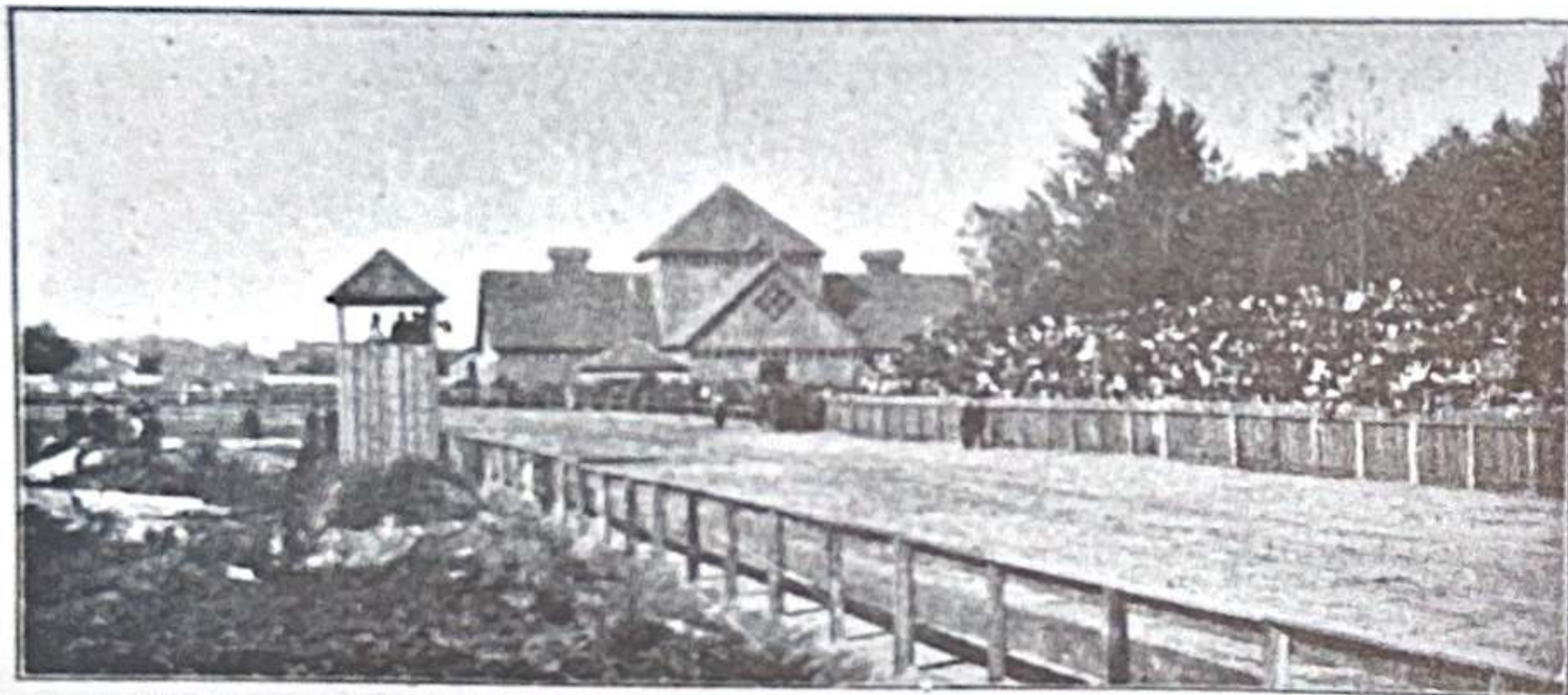
productions was not large, it was perhaps as high a proportion of the population as goes to similar offerings in the 1970s.

People who were young in this period agree almost unanimously that it was a great time to grow up and that Skagit County was a great place in which to do it.



The Burlington Volunteer Firemen's team won second place at the Firemen's Tournament in Lynden in 1910.  
*Picture from Clarence Tennis*

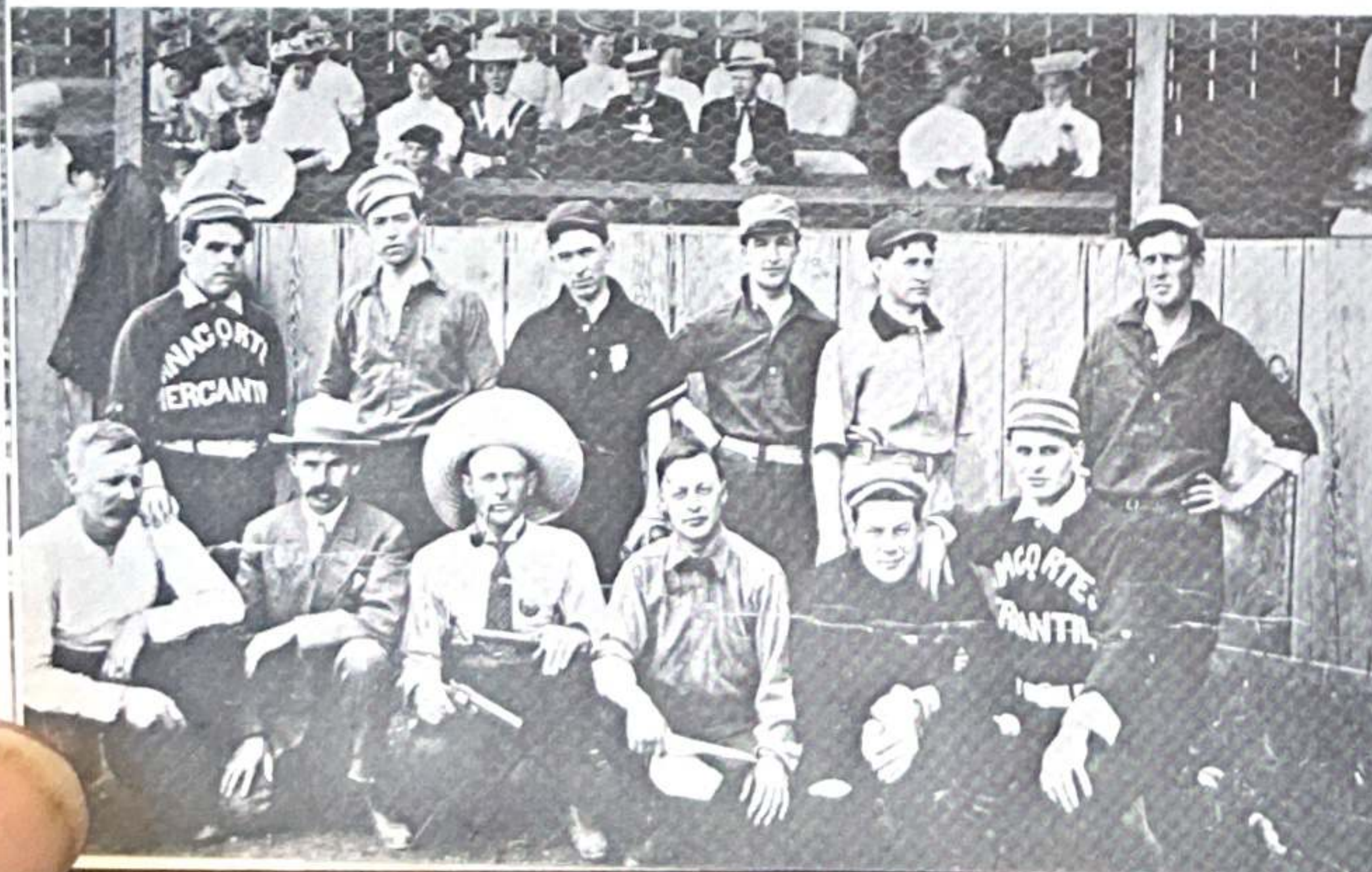
*Reproduced for the Ronald Holttum collection from Sebring's SKAGIT COUNTY ILLUSTRATED, 1903*



SKAGIT COUNTY'S RACE TRACK AND FAIR GROUNDS.

Showing the race track crowded with spectators one day of the Fair, Oct. 3, 1902. Also presenting the judges' stand and large Exposition building. This building is 150 feet square and 50 feet high. The race course is one-half-mile long, and the best winter track in the state. The officers of the Association are: President, N. J. Molkstad; secretary, John L. Anderson; treasurer, I. E. Shrauger. The grounds are located on the outskirts of Mt. Vernon, an ideal spot for a fair ground.

Anacortes shooting team about 1910. Front row, l to r: H. H. Soule, Mr. March, unidentified, unidentified, Richard Hardcastel, Harvey Barney. Back row, l to r: Ivan Alexander, ..... Barnett, Walter Foster, Tom Benn, Dr. Dean, unidentified.  
*Picture from Jean Forrest*



Mrs. W. J. Cornelius is on the horse and Charles A. Nelson is holding it. She is mounted on a sturdy farm horse, not a saddle horse.

*Picture from Grace Talin*



Indian canoe race in Guemes Channel.  
*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

Fir baseball team about 1910.  
*Picture from Ragna Hanstad Moore*



Conway baseball team about 1919. School only went through the 8th grade. Front row, l to r: Emil Locken, Alfred Moen, Carl Olin. Back row: Ed Rose, Mr. L. G. Nyhus (teacher), Harold Lundberg, Bernard Holte, Arne Sande, Lloyd Anderson, Leonard Sande.

*From the Owen Tronsdal collection*





## Chapter XI

### LAW AND ORDER

The Skagit frontier was a curious mixture of honesty and dishonesty, of violence and peace. The 1906 HISTORY tells of sensational murders and other crimes in the years from 1890 to 1905, yet most settlers felt so secure in their lands and possessions that they thought nothing of leaving their houses unlocked even when they were to be away for weeks at a time. Yet the three prisoners who broke out of the county jail in 1904 were identified as a horse thief and two burglars; evidently possessions and houses were not completely safe. Shoplifting was unknown but there always were a few women of good social position who were known to be kleptomaniacs; merchants watched them and listed what they took and their husbands or sons regularly paid the bill. Everyone had a reputation, good, fair, or poor, and was given credit and confidence accordingly without benefit of organized credit rating.

From 1883 when Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act the Coast Guard had played a cat-and-mouse game with the pirates and smugglers who were bringing in Chinese laborers illegally from Victoria. Pirate Kelly who had his headquarters on Guemes Island, was finally sent to prison in 1891, and Ben Ure's active days around Deception Pass ended not long after. Outlaws wanted for serious offenses in the United States and Canada usually passed quietly through the county but one who was caught here became locally famous as the "True Love" bandit.

After killing a man with a bed slat, Charlie Hopkins, a swarthy man with "TRUE" tattooed on the fingers of his left hand and "LOVE" on his right, escaped from the Seattle police and headed north. An Everett officer, knowing that Hopkins was wanted in Seattle, attempted to arrest him but was himself killed along with two other citizens. Skagit officials were notified that this dangerous criminal was coming their way.

In the McMurray area he encountered two hoboes, "blanket stiffs," as they were often called. After robbing them of what little they had he

forced them to walk to a railroad bridge and shot both of them, leaving them for dead. One died instantly but the other, seriously injured, was picked up by a section crew and taken to a hospital where it was found he had been shot with a split bullet, another mark of Hopkins' murders.

The next person who reported seeing him was a young boy, Gov Rogers, driving a milk truck from Sedro Woolley to Lyman. When Hopkins asked for a ride, Rogers, knowing nothing of the story, picked him up. The man tried to sell him a razor stolen from one of the hobos but was refused. When he inquired about a place to spend the night, Gov suggested the hospitable Wiseman home. The Wisemans gave him an unused room upstairs. When the Wiseman sons, Brown and Hobe, returned late from a singing bee at the Utopia school and climbed the stairs to their room they were startled to hear someone jump to the floor of the unused room but went on to bed without investigating.

At breakfast the boys were surprised to find the swarthy man with his tattoos. One of the boys, who had killed a coyote the day before and still had the gun in his pocket, pulled it out and laid it aside as he sat down. Hopkins jerked out his gun but did not threaten any of them. After breakfast he left and continued his journey up river.

That evening in Van Horn he asked to spend the night at the Frank Yeager home but they turned him down because they had several children and did not fancy taking in a stranger. He asked at other homes and was refused, eventually reaching Clark Ely's place. Ely, a bachelor, ran the store and lived in rooms above it. He gave the stranger a room and that was where the tired fugitive finally went to bed. Meanwhile, Mrs. Yeager opened the paper and found a picture and description of the bandit, and realized that he was the man who had come to their door. Mr. Yeager went quickly to the store and wakened Ely, saying that the children were sick and he had to have medicine. When the two men could talk quietly they compared notes



and made plans. Yeager went as fast as possible to Concrete and fetched the marshal, Joe Glover, who came with a gun and handcuffs. Hopkins was sound asleep with his gun under his pillow when they went into his room; Yeager kept him covered while the marshal snapped on the handcuffs before he could reach his gun.

The captive was held in the Concrete lock-up until Bill Bardsley from the county sheriff's office arrived to take him to Burlington by train and on to Mount Vernon to lodge him in the county jail. There local citizens wanted to lynch him, and the other prisoners in the jail were so afraid of him that they all begged to be put together in one of the two cages, leaving him in solitary possession of the other. When Hopkins came to trial he was given a life sentence and spent the rest of his years in the state penitentiary.

The home-grown crimes in the county varied from rank amateur to semi-professional. The kidnapping of Ed English was a bungled affair that caused a few hours of excitement. English, who owned and operated the largest local logging business, was abducted and tied up in a hollow tree in the woods while the solitary kidnapper tried to collect \$5,000 ransom. English managed to free himself, and returned home within a few hours of

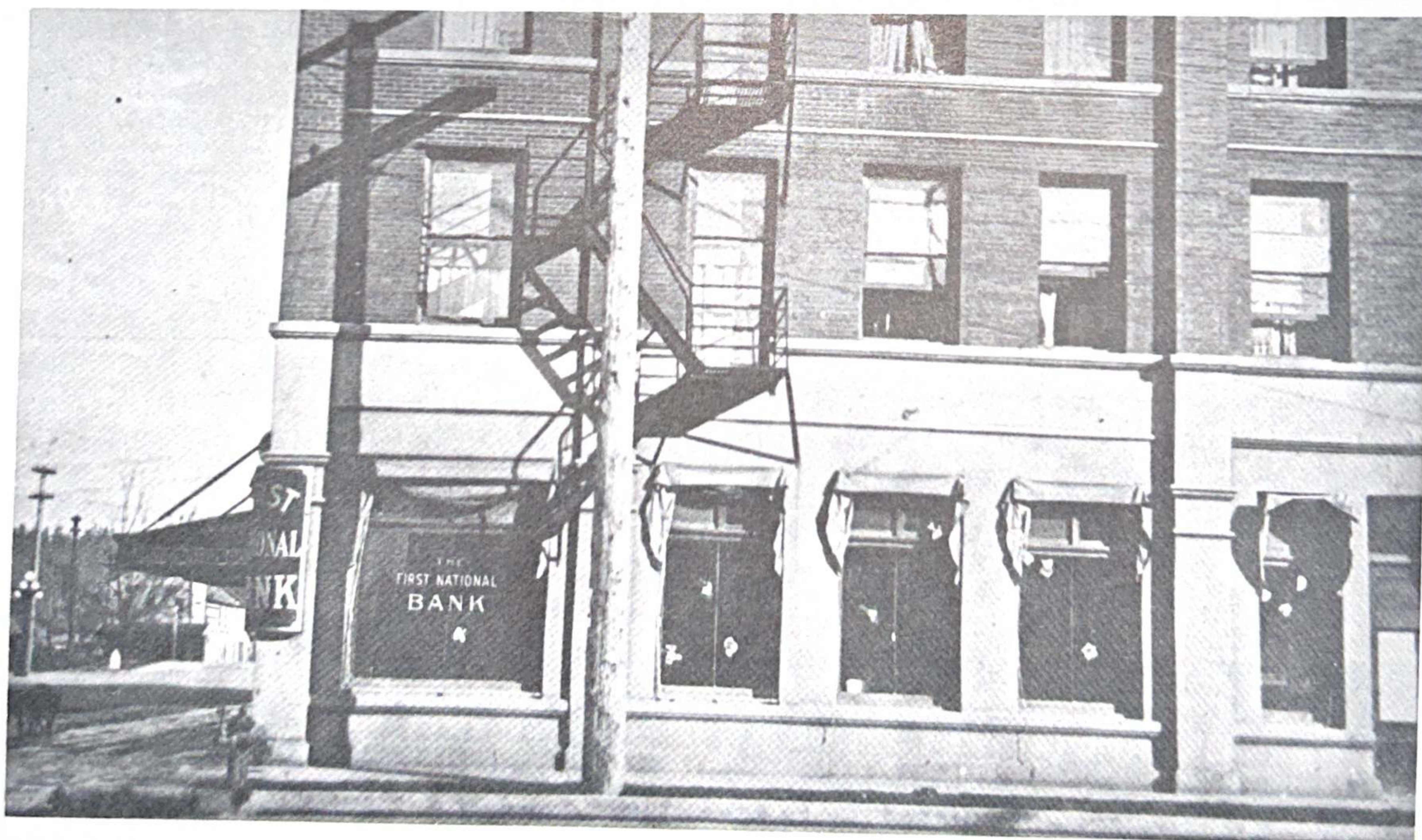
the receipt of the ransom note, so the search for the culprit could begin at once. He was caught very promptly, tried without delay, and sent to prison.

The Sedro Woolley bank robbery in 1914 would have been a cops-and-robbers comedy except for the accidental shooting death of a 14-year-old boy, Melvin Wilson. The cashier of the First National Bank had noticed some suspicious characters loitering around and had notified the officers of the law who had the area staked out that evening when the banks stayed open. While the officers were called away to quell some disturbance at the hotel two of the four or five robbers entered the bank while the others stayed outside to control the street. The cashier, John Guddall, emptied his gun without hitting anyone, then was forced to open the safe and give them over \$11,000 in gold and silver coins—they scorned paper money. Meanwhile, their confederates, the law officers, and various eager citizens were exchanging wild shots outside the building with no damage to anyone except windows and the unfortunate boy some distance away. The bandits escaped with their loot but later four of them were killed in two separate frays and \$7,098 in gold recovered. It was never established whether or not there was a fifth man involved.

The First National Bank of Sedro Woolley after the Great Bank Robbery of 1914 showing the bullet holes in

the windows.

*Picture from Effie Calkins*





One crime in February, 1914, seemed to come straight from a western movie. The Great Northern train No. 59 left Seattle at 4:30 P.M. bound for Bellingham and points north. As it neared the Blanchard depot the Noce brothers, playing nearby and waiting to enjoy the small town amusement of watching the train come in, noticed that it did not stop. As they watched they heard shots and saw flashes from guns. Passengers later told what had happened.

One robber entered the rear end of a passenger car and ordered everyone to put up his hands. Three men leaped up and attempted to overcome the bandit, not seeing his confederate standing at the other end of the car with his gun covering the operation. He shot and killed all three without hitting his partner. The robbers systematically went through the train, taking the money and valuables of all the passengers, then ordered the conductor to have the train stopped to let them off at the foot of the Chuckanut Mountains, far from any railway station.

The sheriff with bloodhounds scoured the mountain without ever picking up a trail. The Great Northern Railway offered a reward of \$5,000 for any information which would lead to the arrest of the hold-up men, and \$30,000 for their capture, but they were never found. It is believed that an accomplice was waiting for them with a boat to make their getaway.

An incident on a lesser scale occurred at Edison in 1915. The Ladies Improvement Club had become concerned over an old man who had drifted into town, and settled down, sleeping in a barn and doing odd jobs to earn money for food and strong drink. When under the influence he frightened the children and the mothers felt that something should be done about his presence and that of other possible inebriates. As a result of their efforts a tiny jail was built of 2" x 4"s; it measured 8' x 10' with one small window. Soon after it was completed the old gentleman serenaded the town when in his cups and was locked up for the night. Having slept it off he was released in the morning without any charges being preferred against him. In the middle of the next night a loud explosion rocked the town and aroused the citizens; when they went out to investigate they found the little four-walled jail spread out like an opened flower. No one was ever arrested nor was the jail ever rebuilt. Tradition does not specify what became of the old gentleman.

A spectacular incident was the robbery of the Edison bank about the middle of a wet November day in 1917. The pool hall across the street from the bank was filled with duck hunters, each with a gun, waiting for the rain to let up. Suddenly a shot rang out and a bullet came through the window and smashed into the big clock on the wall. Two men, the Spurgeon brothers, emerged from the bank carrying bags of money and smoking guns and headed on foot for the Interurban a mile away. The duck hunters leaped into their cars and followed, calling on the bandits to surrender. When they got no response they fired and one of the robbers fell, mortally wounded, just across from the high school. The other surrendered. The students, watching the drama, became so hysterical that school was dismissed and everyone rushed down to the street in front of the bank where people were milling around, picking up scattered money, and telling their individual versions of the story.

Patrick Halloran, who had an office in the bank, had been seriously wounded in the exchange of gunfire and died a few hours later in a hospital. The wounded robber died on the hotel porch. His surviving brother had planned the heist with singular ineptitude while working for the summer on a farm near Edison; he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Rumors that his friends were coming to Edison to shoot up the town kept people jittery for some time, but gradually peace returned.

There were other spectacles and puzzlers. One concerned a county official who was found "drowned" in six inches of water at some distance from home as his accounts were being audited; the accounts showed shortages for which the dead man was blamed but rumor claimed that his death was a murder to seal his mouth. In Concrete a feud which began in Greece seemed to have ended in friendship until both men disappeared at the same time. When the body of one was found in a lonely spot near Concrete the police watched ships landing in Greece and arrested the other as he disembarked. The Sauk Prairie Massacre featured three murders, a suicide, and the unexplained will of Otis Weeden, the murdered man, witnessed the day of the killing by the sons of one of the victims, a lurid jigsaw puzzle whose pieces have never been fitted together to make a clear picture.

Reading through the newspapers of the time one finds numerous accounts of burglaries, assaults, and murders, most of them amateurish or committed in a fit of rage or while under the influence



of liquor. Vandalism hardly appears at all though some of the Halloween pranks might well be put in that category if they occurred today: missing gates, overturned outhouses, buggies on the roofs of barns or sheds, horses or cows pushed and hauled into strange places from which it was difficult to extricate them. Perpetrators were almost never caught and in the few cases where they were, punishment consisted only in undoing the prank. Either there was little white collar crime or it escaped detection; the reported instances are few.

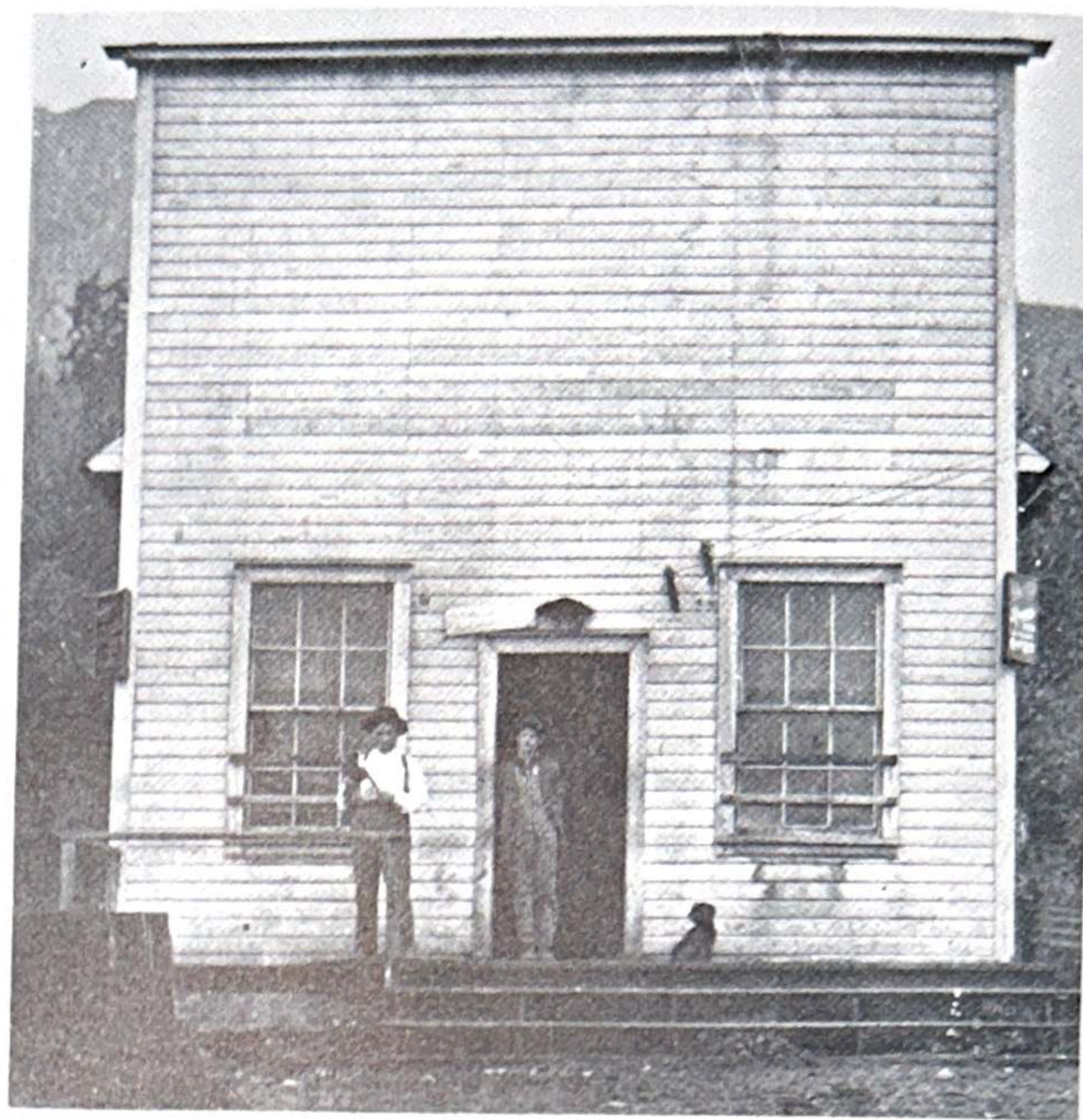
Two related types of larceny, unique to the time, were common though the culprits were seldom brought to court. Fish traps accumulated very large numbers of salmon before they were raised and they were not guarded around the clock. It was easy for fish pirates to raid them and sell the stolen salmon as their own catch. Log pirates similarly raided the log dumps and booms at any stage between the time when the timbers hit the water and the time when they were taken into the mills. Logs were usually branded with the owner's mark but this could be ignored by arrangement with a confederate in a small mill. Catching log and fish pirates was as difficult as apprehending shoplifters today.

By 1915 the newspapers were reporting a number of cases of auto theft, sometimes by young joy riders. Automobile accidents began to be more frequent than runaways, though not yet as deadly as they became when speeds increased above the thirty miles an hour, a limit enforced more by the bad roads than by police.

However, in Skagit County as in the rest of the country, problems which arose out of attempts to control the liquor traffic made up a large part of law enforcement. Their origin and history merit a brief summary.

The establishment of a new community here required three public facilities, a hotel to give rough accommodations to newcomers, a saloon to give them comfort and social intercourse, and a general store for supplies. The occasional temperance town like Avon or Allen could keep saloons outside a limited area but could only make drinking a little less convenient. Dry hotels, like the McGlinn House in LaConner and the Nobar Hotel in Anacortes, were the exception and scarcely inconvenienced the patrons since there were plenty of oases within a few steps of the door.

Experience in the eastern states had shown the tragic effects of alcohol on some Indians, so



First saloon at Rockport. Rockport was a new town in 1903. The rough wooden building is typical of the early drinking establishments on the frontier.

*Picture from Tom Benton*

the sale of liquor on reservations was forbidden. This was enforceable but the general prohibition against selling whiskey to Indians outside reservations was unenforced and probably unenforceable. White liquor sellers flocked to a camp of Indian hop-pickers like flies to honey. A saloon at Edison, built on piles over the water of the slough, was reported to have a trap door in the floor behind the bar; a knock from below signalled a canoe customer who could be served very inconspicuously.

In the beginning there was no regulation of the liquor traffic to whites. As soon as towns began incorporating, however, saloon licenses became an important source of revenue. In the years around 1900 Sedro Woolley, at the hub of a circle of logging camps and mills, levied no property taxes since license fees were adequate to support city services.

In the upper Skagit Valley when the logging camps and mills were flourishing, each town, close to the camps, had its assortment of saloons, pool halls, bawdy houses, and hotels for the men's Saturday night on the town. At Marblemount one of the first establishments to greet the incoming prospectors and miners was a saloon of sorts, a tent with a plank set across between two barrels as a bar. It prospered enough to build a log cabin within a short time. Mineral Park, 20 miles up the



Cascade River from Marblemount, once was the scene of much mining activity and had a road-house saloon for those passing through.

Lyman and Hamilton were mill towns and had plenty of competitors for the whiskey dollar. Bird-view never developed into a town but since it was a river boat stop and had a mill it was provided with a saloon. Concrete in the heyday of cement plants and logging in 1920 increased its population to 1,700 and had 11 drinking establishments and three houses of female entertainment. Rockport, Sauk City, and all the other gathering places along the river saw to it that no one with the price went thirsty. One river boat captain was noted for his habit of turning his boat around for the return trip to Seattle when the whiskey barrel was empty, no matter where he was on the scheduled run.

Home distilling was an active business from the earliest days though there were no accurate data for obvious reasons. The ease of concealing stills on the mountain sides, up the creeks, along the bays, and among the islands provided the basis for a lively industry as soon as it became profitable. After 1900 new settlers from the mountains of North Carolina moved in numbers to the upper Skagit to work in the woods and the mills. Some of them brought with them skills in the making of "mountain dew" and the evading of "revenooers" superior to those of the earlier local moonshiners. The producers were all ready as soon as the market expanded. The prohibition movement and the increasing taxes on saloons and liquor furnished the stimulus.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union,



A saloon of the early 1900s.  
Skagit County  
Historical Museum

Saloon in Anacortes. This is an elegant establishment. Note the spittoons, the swinging doors in the background, and the picture of a Gibson girl beside them. More earthy saloons were likely to have more revealing pictures of women.

Picture from Wallie Funk







W.C.T.U. Fountain in Anacortes. Presented to the City of Anacortes in memory of Miss Carrie M. White, third president of the WCTU of the state and first president in Anacortes. The drinking fountain for horses is on the left, that for dogs at the bottom facing the viewer, and the one for men at the right. It originally was located in the business district where horses and men were thirsty.

Inscription on WCTU fountain in Anacortes:

DEDICATED TO THE PUBLIC  
IN MEMORY OF  
MISS CARRIE M. WHITE  
THIRD PRESIDENT OF W.C.T.U.  
OF WASHINGTON TERRITORY,  
AND FIRST PRESIDENT  
OF ANACORTES W.C.T.U.  
BY THE MEMBERS THEREOF

*Wallie Funk*

WCTU, had been founded in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1874, just about the time that settlement was getting under way in Skagit County. By the 1880s white women were becoming numerous enough to have some influence and WCTU chapters appeared in most of the incorporated towns. The temperance movement had made enough progress by 1888, when the state constitution was being framed, to generate pressure for statewide prohibition. Instead of including such an article in the constitution, however, the framers submitted the question for a separate vote. (Women's suffrage was treated in the same way.) In 1889 the constitution was overwhelmingly ratified by the voters but both prohibition and votes for women were soundly defeated.

The dry forces gathered themselves up to fight harder. The WCTU, joined by the Anti-Saloon League and some of the churches, campaigned with printed booklets, plays, declamation contests, newspaper columns, and every available kind of publicity to convince the public of the evils of drinking and the necessity for abolishing the saloon and the liquor traffic. Carrie Nation, the ax-wielding, saloon-smashing crusader, was scheduled to speak in Anacortes and Mount Vernon in 1910 but had to cancel because of illness in her family. Billie Sunday, the spell-binding evangelist of the day, preached eloquently against demon rum to an audience of 2,000 in a tent in Mount Vernon that same year—the town then had a total population of 2,381. The Anacortes WCTU gave the town a fountain for the business district; it had a water-

ing trough for horses on the side toward the street, two low drinking basins for dogs at the sides, and toward the sidewalk a fountain where a man could quench his thirst with water instead of pushing through the swinging doors which lined the street.

The male population was divided on the prohibition issue. Some men supported the WCTU position. Others who themselves did not drink felt that saloons brought business and that revenues from license fees were too important a part of town budgets to lose. Some married men whose wives were active in the temperance movement enjoyed themselves in the fellowship of a favorite saloon or pool hall, drinking moderately enough that their wives either did not suspect or chose to ignore it, though their children puzzled over why daddy's breath always smelled of cloves when he returned from town. Of course many liked things as they were; they managed to get home safely even when they did not hold their liquor too well since the horse stayed sober. One celebrant returning from Anacortes late at night got on the railroad trestle instead of the wagon bridge to March's Point but the horse made it safely in total darkness. Small boys made a regular income collecting and selling beer bottles.

The first victory of the dry forces was "local option" which permitted divisions of the state to decide for themselves whether they wanted saloons. In 1909 rural Skagit County outside the incorporated towns voted dry and the country saloons were closed in early 1910. This aroused the ire of Mc-



Murray, a wide-open but unincorporated community which had voted wet but was overwhelmed by the dry vote elsewhere. It hastened to take out a city charter and to license saloons. The county prosecutor was trying to close them and a full scale legal battle was shaping up. Before it reached a showdown local option elections were held in all the incorporated towns of the county and only Mount Vernon, Lyman, and Hamilton went dry. Burlington, five miles away from Mount Vernon, celebrated the Glorious Fourth that year by permitting its saloons to stay open around the clock from July 1 to the 5th. The railroad fare from Mount Vernon to Burlington was only 10 cents, yet from one Saturday night to Sunday, the Mount Vernon depot sold \$70 worth of tickets. The situation became so notorious, witness the 1911 cartoon in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, that in February of 1912 the Burlington City Council decided to ban saloons. The liquor interests fought the decision but it was upheld by the courts.

This checkerboard of wet and dry areas caused serious law enforcement problems to the town marshals and to the sheriff and his deputies, citizens

who had learned their duties by meeting problems as they arose and who knew all their fellow citizens personally. "Blind pigs," which the next generation called "speak-easies," began to appear, moonshiners multiplied, and liquor salesmen lurked in the bushes around country dance halls on Saturday nights. To the temperance forces that meant that statewide prohibition was necessary. In the Washington referendum of 1914 the dries triumphed. Lawsuits held up enforcement for a year but effective in January, 1916, both the manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages were banned in the state. It is worth noting that the purchase of liquor was not illegal. Citizens could still buy limited quantities of any beverage they wished in another state or Canada and bring it in, though federal law forbade shipment of liquor by public carrier into dry states.

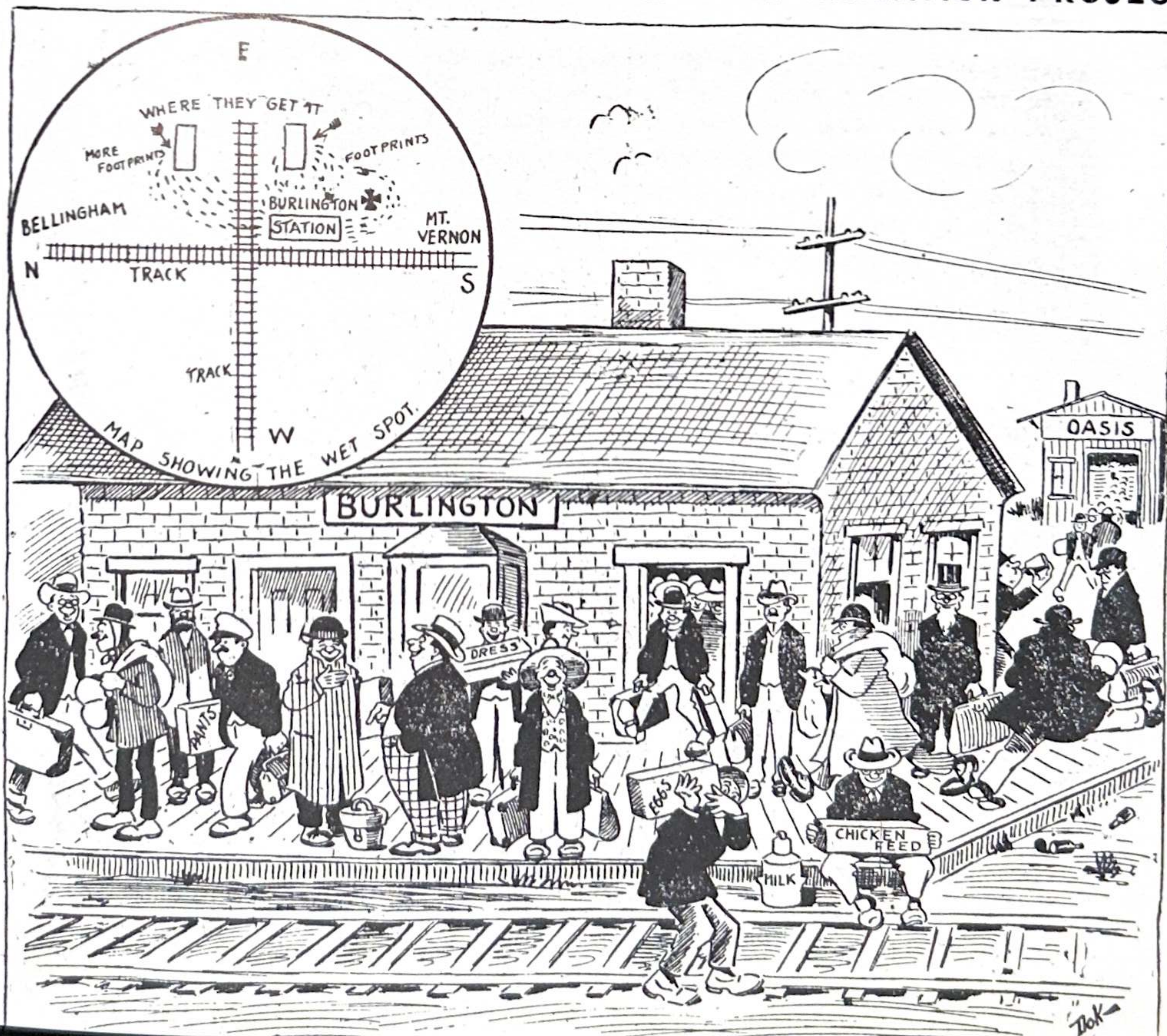
During this same period the temperance movement was making enough progress nationwide that many other states were going dry. The outbreak of World War I emphasized the need for conserving grain to feed the hungry. Under these pressures Congress passed the 18th Amendment which was

THE SEATTLE DAILY TIMES, TUESDAY EVENING, MARCH 7, 1911.

## BURLINGTON A WESTERN WASHINGTON IRRIGATION PROJECT

In the period of "local option," when each town decided for itself whether or not to license saloons, Mount Vernon voted dry and Burlington wet. The rail fare between the two towns was 10c and Mr. Brusewitz, the Mount Vernon station agent, sold \$70 worth of tickets for the trip between Saturday and Sunday evening.

From the collection of James P. Kean





quickly ratified in 1919 and went into effect in January, 1920. The Volstead Act which implemented it forbade the manufacture, transportation, and sale (but again not the purchase) of intoxicating beverages and defined the level of intoxication at 2.5 per cent alcohol.

From 1916 to 1920 the enforcement of Washington's prohibition law devolved upon local police forces and county sheriffs, who had little experience and no guide lines, and who already had their hands full with other law enforcement problems. The moonshiners, already in business, found profitable markets multiplying. Obviously the sheriff and his deputies could not patrol every creek and mountain side and island to search for stills. Rum-runners compounded the problem. Very large numbers of local citizens owned boats and many a boat owner while in Canadian waters laid in supplies for himself (perfectly legal under Washington's prohibition law). It was easy to add a few bottles for a friend and from that point it was only a few steps into a lucrative business.

Many solid citizens had consistently opposed prohibition as a solution to the drinking problem. Some of them felt that the moonshiners and bootleggers who brought them good liquor were performing a public service at some risk to themselves and were glad to protect them when they could. One rum-runner who later earned a local reputation as the most reliable in the business got his start, so the story goes, by bringing in from Victoria the whiskey that some of his business and professional friends felt they needed to celebrate the opening of the Skagit Golf and Country Club. When the first lot was stolen from its hiding place before the opening he made a special trip to Victoria to replace it at his own expense.

Ben Ure's Saloon and Dance Hall. Ben Ure smuggled Chinese and any other profitable merchandise and offered a haven for others who operated outside the law. His saloon and dance hall stood on the Cornet Bay side of Ben Ure's Island which lies just inside Deception Pass to the south. He furnished the girls as well as the music.

*Original from Ed Rodgers*

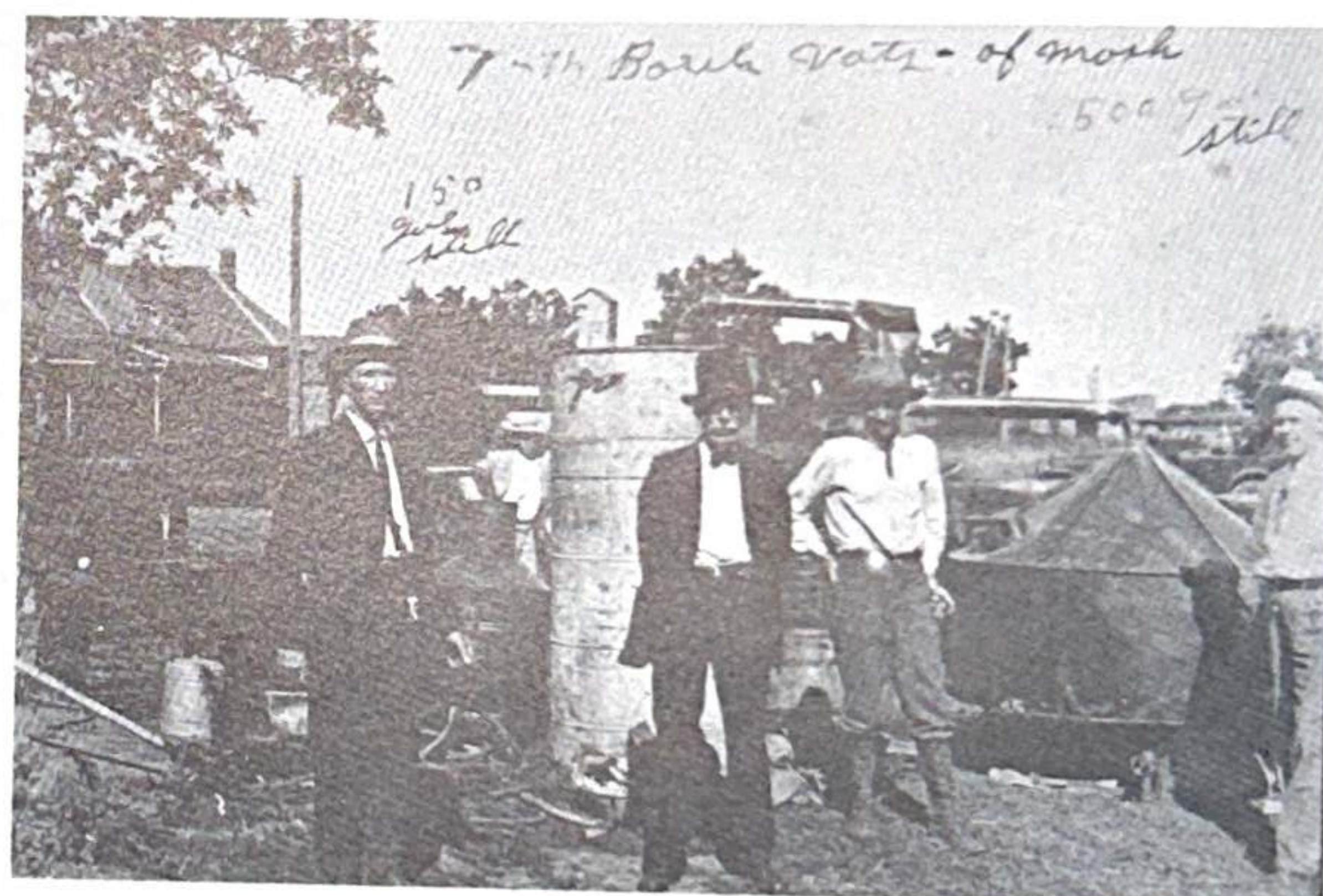


A moonshine still brought into Anacortes by the local authorities and pictured in front of the Anacortes City Hall and jail with the Chief of Police, Al Sellenthin, Tom March, and an unidentified man.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*

Moonshine stills captured by the sheriff and his deputies and the vats of mash.

*Skagit County Historical Museum*





Most of the story of prohibition belongs to the period after 1920 when the Volstead Act brought the Coast Guard and a few other agents of the United States government into the enforcement business without notable success. Local law officers were glad to turn over to the federal officers as much as possible their responsibilities in this area.

Between 1890 and 1920 there were seven men who held the office of sheriff of Skagit County; James O'Loughlin, E. D. Davis, J. P. Millett, Ed Wells, C. A. Risbell, Charles Harmon, and Charles Stevenson. They were citizens who had the respect and confidence of the electorate and who did their jobs competently in terms of the times. An average term of little more than four years is not long enough to develop much professional expertise but those were simpler times.

The jails of the day were simple, too. The first one in Mount Vernon was built of 2" x 6"s laminated against each other like the logs of a log house. The jail was upstairs in the two-story building and the jailer lived in the downstairs rooms. So solidly was this pre-1890 building constructed that it is still in use as a dwelling house today, its structure unrecognizable because it has been covered with aluminum siding.

When the question of the county seat was finally settled after the second county seat fight the commissioners contracted for a brick courthouse at the corner of First and Pine Streets in Mount Vernon in 1893. Both the courthouse and the jail immediately behind it were two stories high. The jail had barred windows and could be reached only through the sheriff's office on the second floor of the courthouse. There was a jail yard behind it where lesser offenders were allowed to take the sun. And there was a pen where the blood-

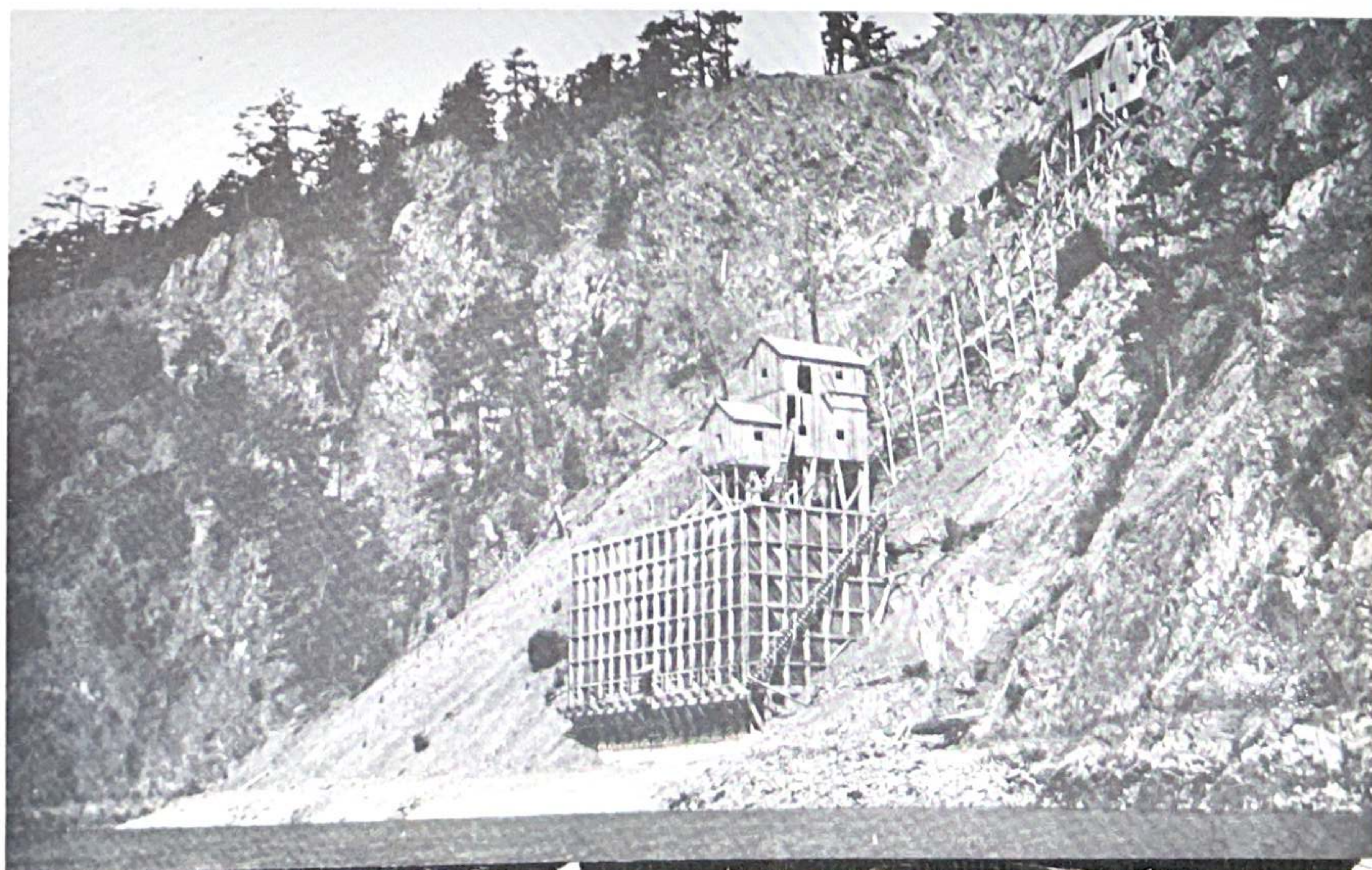
hounds were kept. Small boys peeped through the cracks in the fence expecting to see raging beasts and were disillusioned at the sight of peacefully sleeping hounds. Prisoners could talk with people on the street through the bars of their cells, so it is no wonder that there was at least one jail break. In June, 1904, three prisoners sawed through the bars of their cage, dug a hole under the brick wall of the yard, and escaped. Two were captured at Rockport but the third escaped into Canada.

Both the State of Washington and the county experimented in putting prisoners to work around 1910. The state established a rock quarry at Deception Pass and set up a convict camp to work it. The quarried rock was crushed on the site and carried away by barges for use on the roads. The contracts for building the barracks, rock crusher, and loading bunker were let in 1909 and the quarry was worked at least through 1910 — since at Christmas that year the combined WCTUs of Anacortes and Mount Vernon gave a party and a big dinner for the convicts. A second state camp was near Blanchard where the prisoners began work on the road which was later to be Chuckanut Highway. The barracks for these convicts was on the beach at the foot of the Oyster Creek ravine. During 1910 the men blasted out rock and used it for fill on the mud flats, constructing about 4,000 feet of road. Since both projects were short lived there must have been problems which were serious but there seems to be no record of them.

Skagit County had tried using prisoners on work assignments as soon as it separated from Whatcom. It may be that men worked out their fines fairly commonly, but the records do not show how extensive the practice was. It is known that prisoners from the county jail worked at times in the rock quarry at the south end of Pleasant Ridge

Deception Pass bunker for loading the rock crushed at the convict camp. This complex appears to have operated only for the year 1910. Note the high tide line which would permit barges to load by gravity. The icy water and tidal currents below and the precipitous rocks above enabled one guard to control a large working crew during daylight hours.

Picture from  
George E. Morelan





*This camp on the H. H. Nelson & Co. road near  
Huelmo, Comish yard. This was built for me. had the first picture taken near  
H-2*

at Rexville. It is doubtful that they ever performed a very large amount of the labor, however, since the pictures which have come down to us do not seem to show any prisoners at work.

The sheriff's men were sometimes called on to deal with caravans of gypsies who came through in covered wagons drawn by horses. The women told fortunes and it was believed that the men stole chickens, horses, or anything which they could use. They always had extra horses with the caravans and the men bought, sold, and traded horses. When citizens complained, such a caravan would be escorted to the county line and so passed on to the next area.

About the time of World War I the International Workers of the World, the IWW, gained a great deal of strength among the rough, nomadic single men who moved from job to job in the logging camps and mills. The men had legitimate grievances but no habit or technique for adjusting them or even discussing them. The IWW believed in violence and their threat or use of violence was met with force everywhere; the Centralia Massacre was the most notorious instance. In another instance, when several hundred IWWs gathered in Concrete in support of a strike, the sheriff's men disarmed them, loaded them into trucks, and dumped them at the Snohomish County line.

Looking backward from the 1970s toward this earlier time it seems to the casual observer that there probably was a great deal less law then, but perhaps rather more order. That is a generalization that would be hard to prove, however.



*at the time the camp was built*

The Deception Pass convict camp in 1910. The prisoners were brought here by the state to quarry rock which was crushed and loaded on barges. The camp and quarry were only operated for a couple of years.

*Picture from Les Finsen*

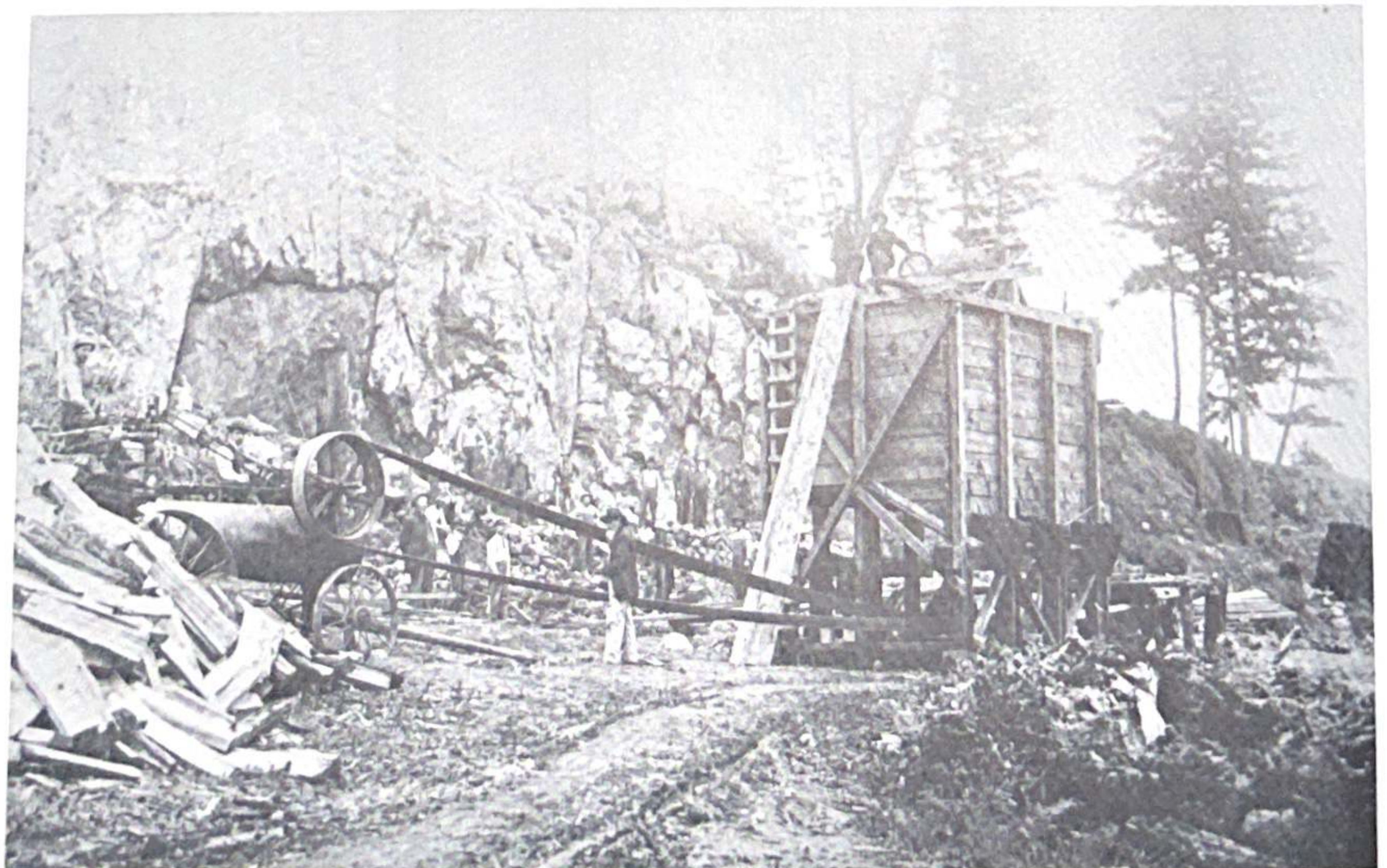
Rock quarry at Rexville on Pleasant Ridge. The rock was crushed for use on the roads. Men in picture are not identified.

*Picture from Grace Talin*



Rock quarry on Pleasant Ridge near Rexville after 1910. Rock was taken from the hill and crushed for roads when Charlie Nelson was Road Supervisor. Some of the men working here were from the county jail, working off their fines. There was a cookhouse to feed them. The men in this picture are not all identified but do not appear to include any prisoners. L to r: 1, Chester Nelson; 2, 3, Rudene; 4, N. A. Nelson; 5, Eric Anderson; 6, Charles L. Dwelley; 7, Charles Nelson; 8, 9, Tyde Dunlap; 10, Gust Pearson; 11.

*Picture from Grace Talin*





## Chapter XII

### FAITH, FASHION, AND FORMALITIES

Before the white chechacos reached Skagit County the Roman Catholic missionaries to the Indians had started churches at Tulalip and Coupeville. Local Indians who attended services there came home, excited about the new religion, and built a "brush" church on Swinomish Channel where they worshipped for many years. The bell of this church, brought by sea to the mouth of the Columbia and carried overland to Puget Sound with great difficulty, tolled all day long when the news of the Point Elliott Treaty and the cession of Indian lands was received in 1855. The Indian Catholic church on the reservation replaced the "brush" church in 1868, was enlarged in 1877, and still stands today as the oldest church building in the county, though it is no longer used. The religious history of the tribes is told in Martin J. Sampson's book, *INDIANS OF SKAGIT COUNTY*.

As white settlers began to arrive they included missionary ministers of many faiths, some supported wholly or in part by national church groups, others dependent on their own efforts for much or all of their living expenses. Local citizens who organized a church had to find or build a meeting place, furnish it, and take care of incidental expenses. Lodge halls were frequently used for church meetings. In LaConner the Conners, who were Catholic, actively helped other religious groups to get started, offering their home as a meeting place. A new little Catholic church was built in 1873 on the LaConner hill. Edison was predominantly Catholic and masses were said there from 1874 by a priest who came down from Whatcom. Anacortes Catholics were later served from Edison after it had a resident priest. As towns grew and the church population grew with them, more church buildings were erected and masses were said with some regularity in more locations; since it was becoming easier to get from one place to another one priest continued to share his time among

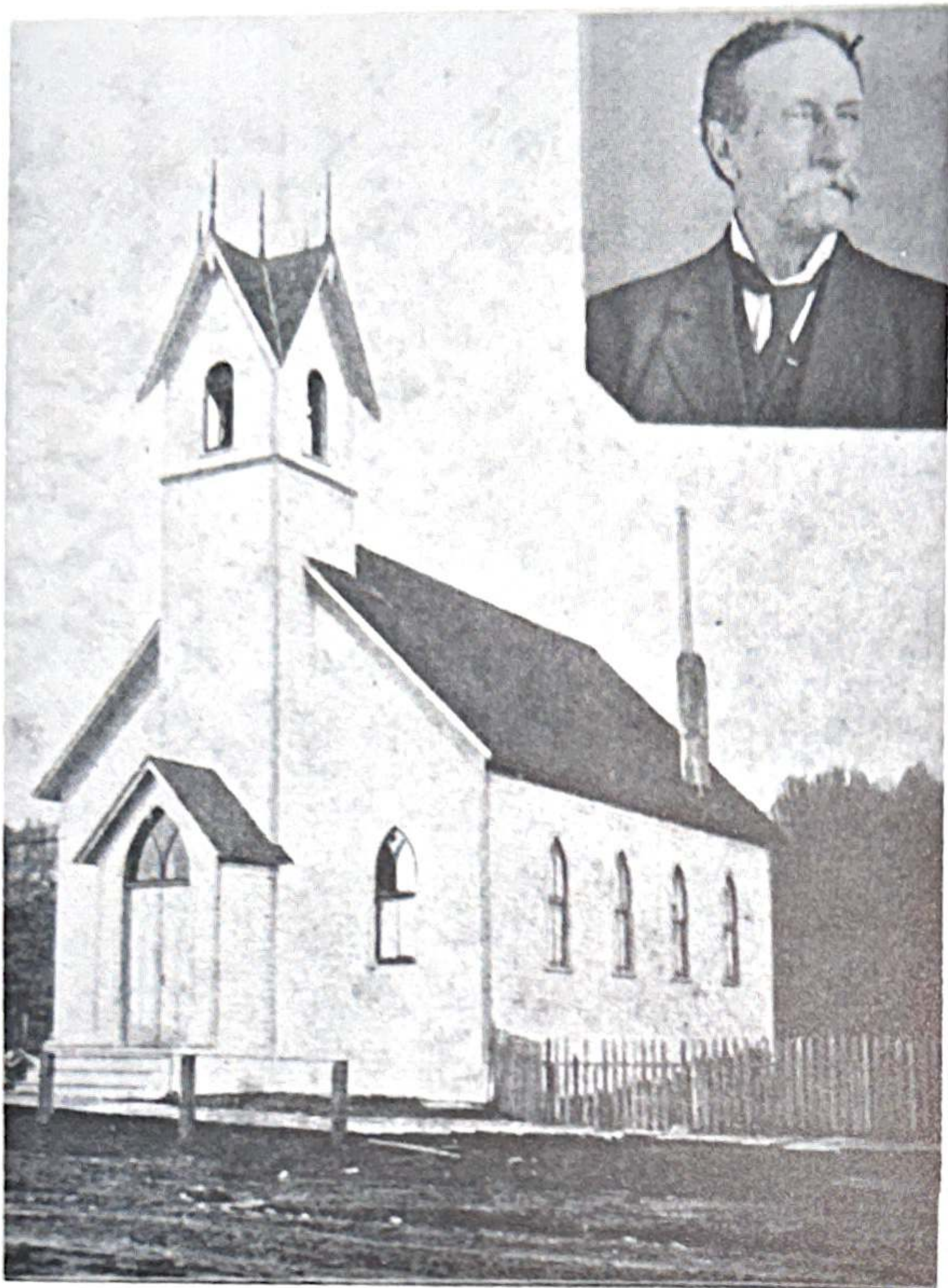
different congregations. McMurray had a Catholic chapel in 1903 but no resident priest. The Swinomish Reservation and LaConner maintained separate churches but shared a priest for many years before the two congregations joined.

The first missionary ministers of the Protestant denominations were Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians.

In 1870 Reverend M. J. Luark, a Methodist, started a church at Skagit City and in 1872 Reverend G. H. Greer of Coupeville organized a tiny congregation in the settlement on the Skagit below the log jam, the clearing of which in 1879 permitted the founding of Mount Vernon. There was no Methodist church building in the town until 1890 but the Mount Vernon Methodists date their founding on Reverend Greer's work and celebrated their centennial in 1972. Another traveling minister, J. N. Dennison, preached to small groups in LaConner and his followers purchased ground for a church and finally were able to raise enough money to build it in 1885. Sedro's first church group was a Methodist congregation which began in 1884. A landmark in the county is the Avon Methodist church, first built in 1887, constantly kept up and modernized, and still beautiful and in regular use today. The Bay View Methodist church dates from 1889, that in Burlington from 1891; the latter was the first church in town, built when the ground around had just been logged off and stumps still crowded the landscape. There were Methodist churches in Clear Lake and Hamilton after 1900. The Free Methodists had a church at Riverside north of the Skagit on the road to Burlington before they moved to Mount Vernon in 1910. Swedes built a Methodist church on Pleasant Ridge in which they conducted services in the language and forms of their church in Sweden.

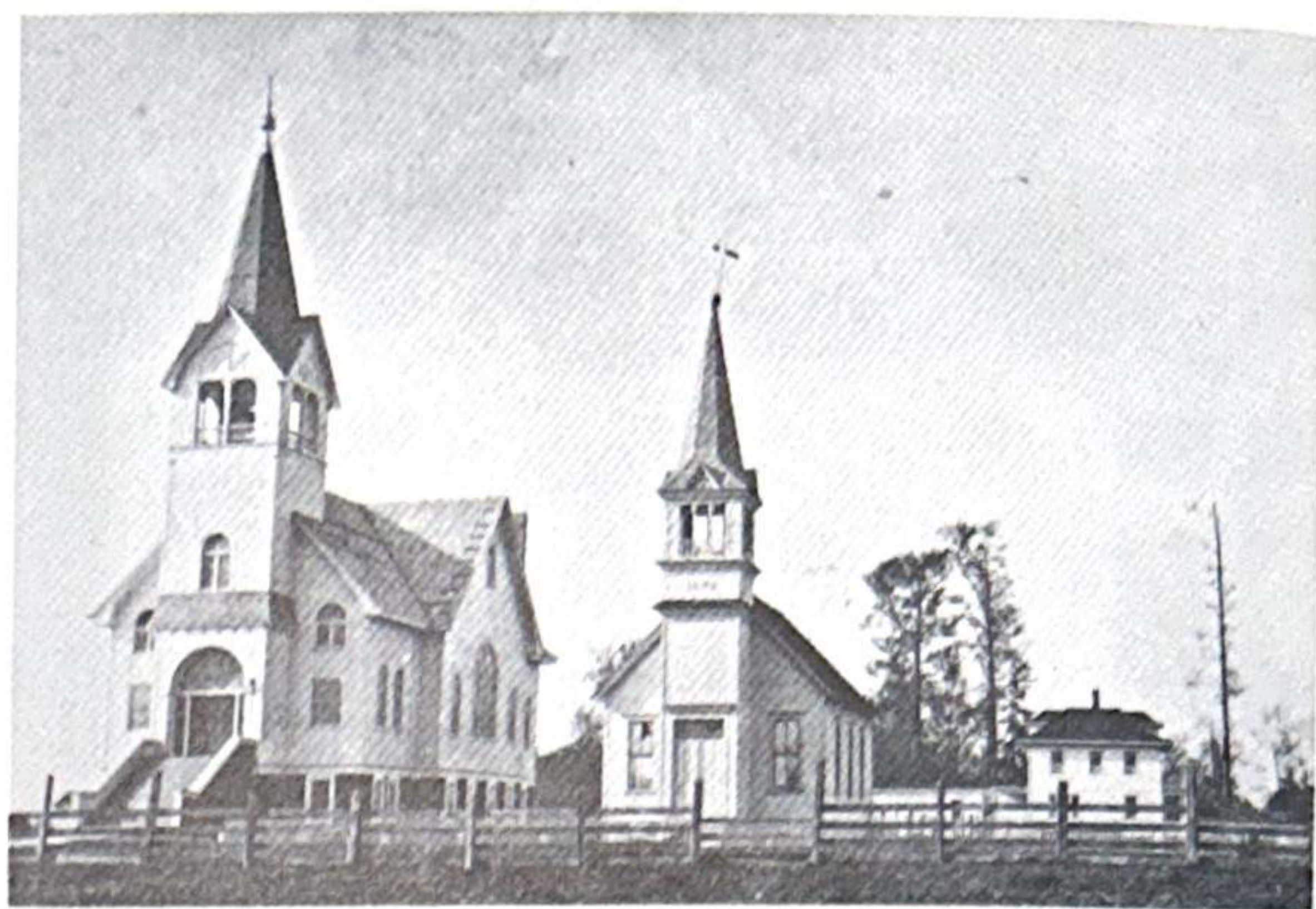
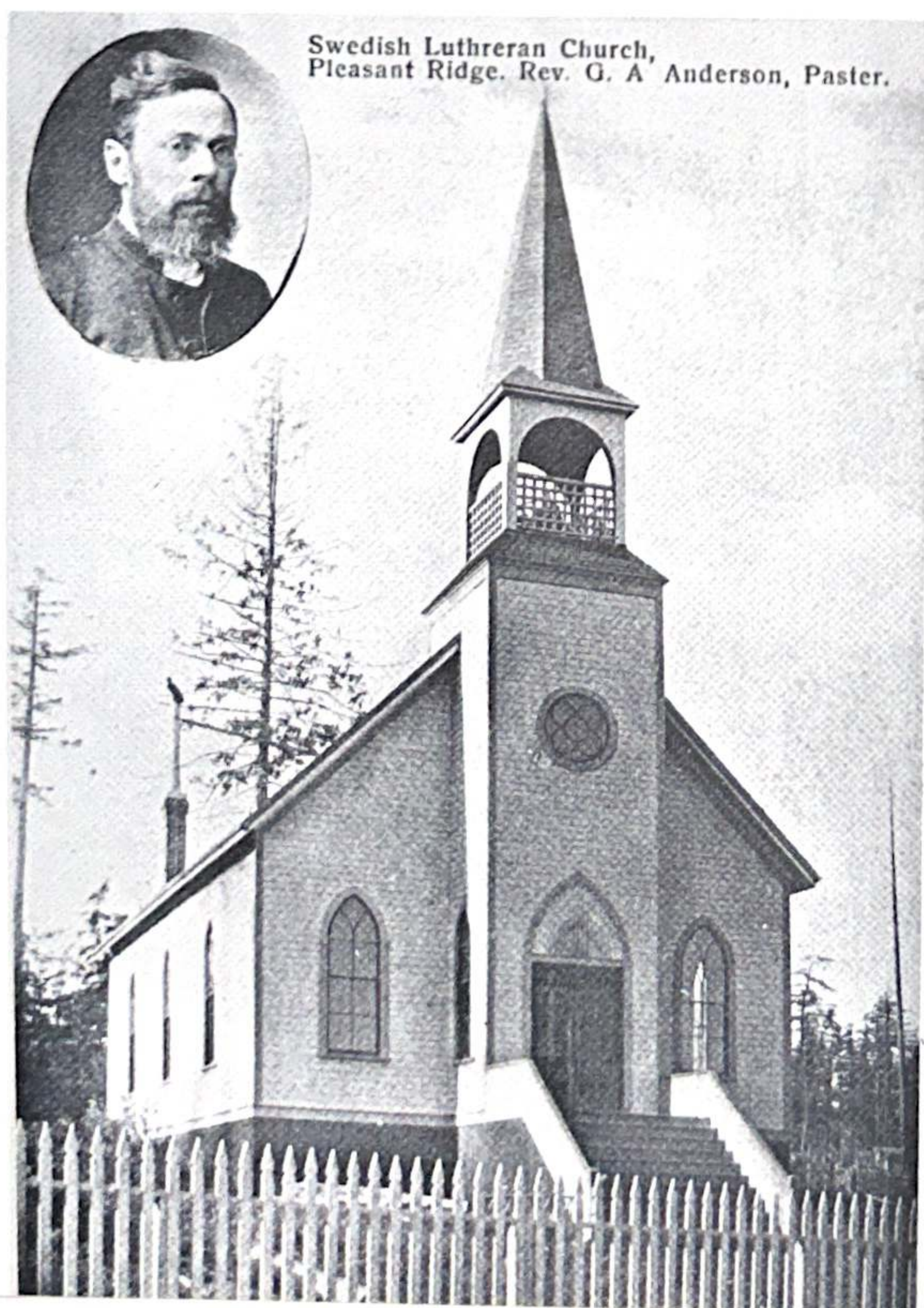
One of the most vigorous and ubiquitous of the missionary ministers was the Baptist, Reverend





Davis Memorial Baptist church in Mount Vernon, built in 1884. It stood originally on North 1st Street across from the Carnation Company (which was built much later than the church) but was later moved to 3rd Street. When the present church was built the old church building became the Breathour Sheet Metal Works, and was eventually torn down. *Picture from Ebba Hamburg*

Pleasant Ridge Swedish Lutheran church about 1900. *Picture from Anne Carlson*



The old Norwegian Lutheran church at Fir, built in 1896, and the new one, dedicated in 1915. *From the Owen Tronsdal collection*

B. N. L. Davis, who settled in 1872 at Riverside just above the place where 19 years later the Great Northern Railway bridge would span the Skagit. He farmed with such success that in 1886, according to the HISTORY, he was the sixth largest taxpayer in the county, owning property assessed at \$16,389. Yet he found time to serve Baptist congregations from LaConner to Hamilton and was famous for always meeting his commitments. In 1882 he organized the Bethesda Baptist church in LaConner and in 1884 a church in Mount Vernon which was named the Davis Memorial Baptist church in his honor. He officiated at weddings and funerals as well as conducting services throughout the area, traveling by rowboat or on foot over trails which often necessitated wading through swamps. He held baptismal services out of doors on lower delta sloughs before there were churches equipped for baptism by total immersion according to the rites of his church. In addition to farming and religious duties he found time to take part in community activities. He served as county treasurer for one term and was on the committee which organized and wrote the constitution for the first Pioneer Association. How all this could have been fitted into the available days defies the imagination.

Besides the Baptist churches in Mount Vernon and LaConner there was a Swedish Baptist church in Mount Vernon and another at Harmony. An English language country Baptist church at Ridgeway on McLean Road shared a minister with LaConner.

The Congregationalists came to Anacortes in 1877 in an unusual project undertaken by an unusual man. The Reverend O. E. Tade of Boston came around Cape Horn to Puget Sound, intent





Indian Catholic church on the Swinomish Reservation, the oldest church building in the county, dating from 1868.  
*Ray Jordan*

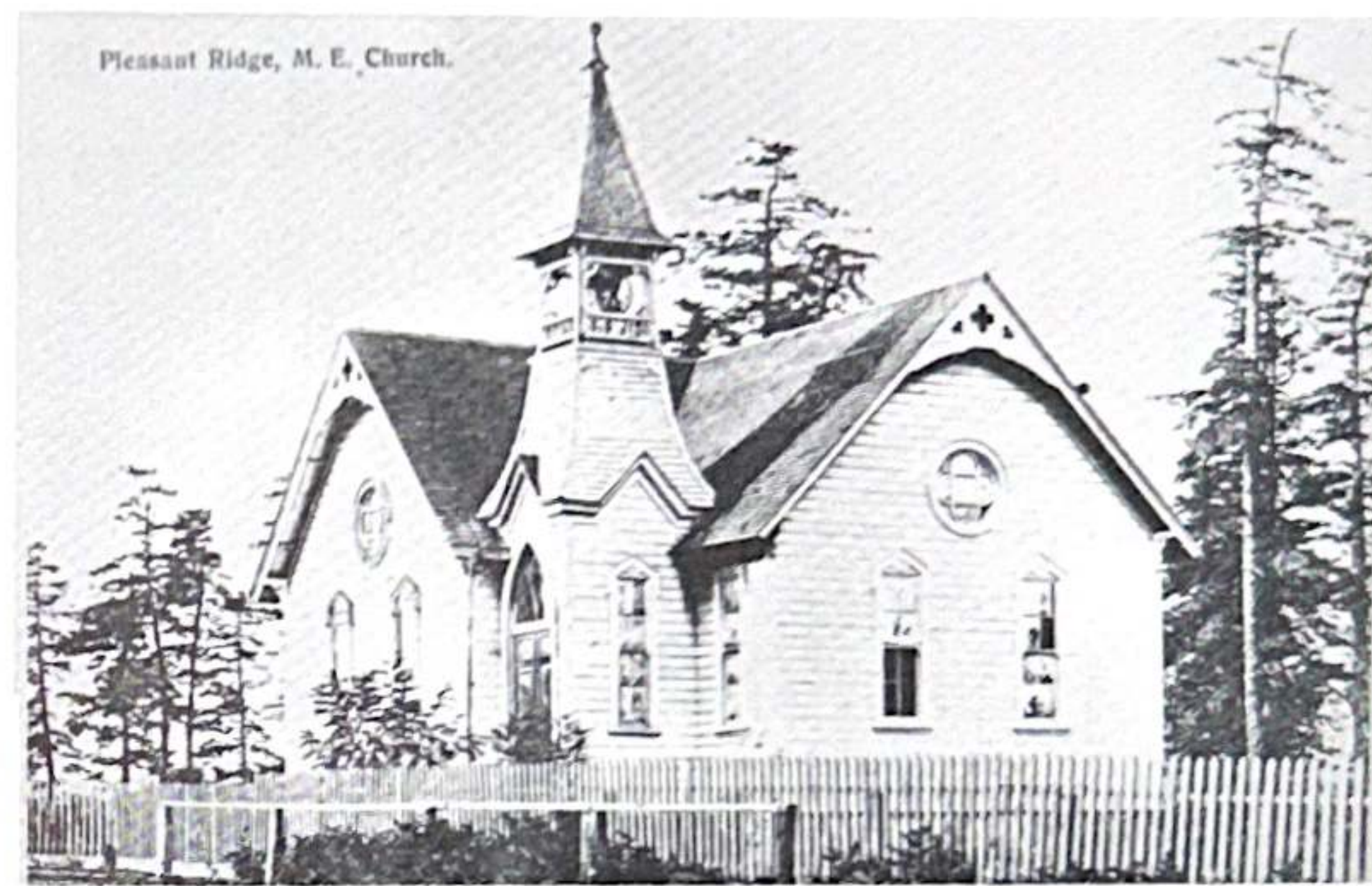
on founding an academy where a Christian education could be given young people in a setting free of the evils of civilization. He selected a site on Fidalgo Island within the present city limits of Anacortes but then far removed from anything which could be called a town. With his own funds and a great deal of his own labor he built a home for himself and a building for his school which was called Alden Academy. He opened the co-educational, inter-racial school in 1879. Around it he platted a temperance town which he called Bancroft. The school offered an education at secondary and college level when no other school in the county went above the 8th grade and it drew students from a wide area. It suffered financial difficulties, however, and foundered after several years, in 1884 according to one account, in 1891 according to another. Since Bancroft was incorporated into Anacortes in the boom year of 1890 as "O. E. Tade's first addition" the later date is more plausible.

Whatever the date of the closing of the school, the Congregational church opened in Anacortes in 1887, three years before the boom, with Reverend Horace Taylor as the minister. In 1893 we find him opening the mission Congregational church at Rosario and also serving a congregation at Fidalgo City (later to be called Dewey), making the trip from one post to the other by rowboat through the treacherous currents and whirlpools of Deception Pass when weather permitted, or walking over poor trails through dense woods past the north end of Pass Lake. From that point the trail was better since Mr. Halperin walked it daily from his home there to his store in Fidalgo City. A Congregational church was organized in Edison in 1889 and the



Avon Methodist church, built in 1887 and in continuous use since that date.

*Picture from Mount Vernon Argus*



Pleasant Ridge Methodist Episcopal church about 1905.

*Picture from Lou Carlson*

Interior of Pleasant Ridge Methodist Episcopal church.

*Picture from Elmer Larson*







Dedication in 1915 of the new Fir-Conway Norwegian Lutheran church. The old church which had been built in 1896 is in the background and beyond that is the Fir-Conway bridge over the South Fork which had just replaced the ferry in 1914.

*From the Owen Tronsdal collection*



Methodist Episcopal church in Burlington, about 1910.  
*Picture from Jessie Whitney Pulver*

Bethesda Baptist church in LaConner. The church was organized in 1882 by Reverend B. N. L. Davis and housed in a smaller building until this second church building was constructed in 1902 and dedicated in 1903.

*Picture from Eva Gaches Collinson*



Immaculate Conception Church in Mount Vernon, built in 1913, replacing the earlier wooden building of the first Roman Catholic church.

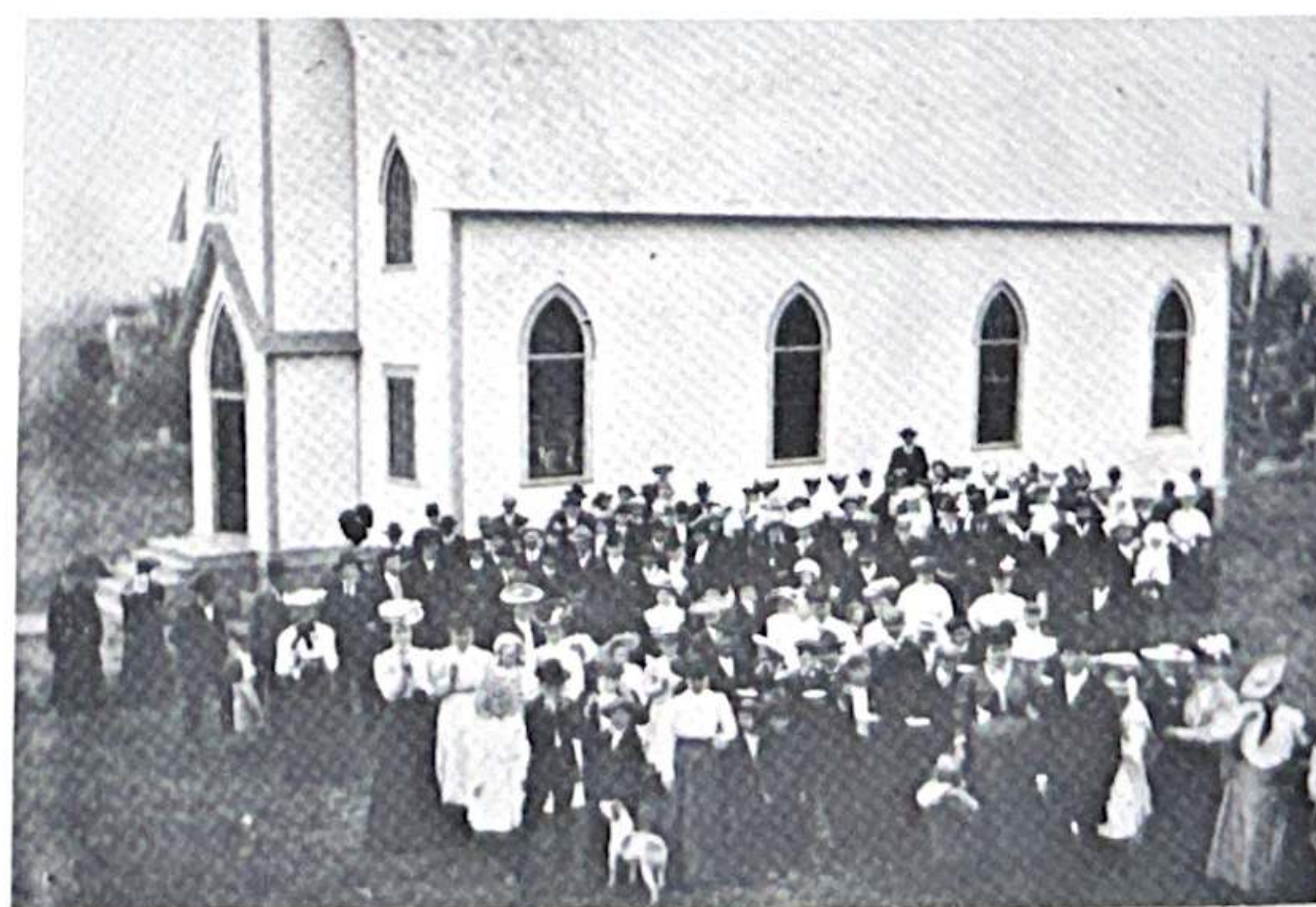
*Photograph by Walter R. Jackson*

building erected in 1892. Clear Lake and McMurray had Congregational churches in 1903.

The Presbyterian church began in Anacortes in 1891 during the boom, at first housed in a tent. In Sedro a small group of Presbyterians organized by Reverend George Raymond met in a tent shack from 1889 until a church was built in 1892. Meanwhile in Woolley a group called the "New Hope Society" met in the "church parlors" provided by Mr. Woolley from 1890 to 1897 when the two congregations merged about the time that the two towns finally joined forces. The Presbyterian churches in the other towns of the county date from after 1900.

With the increasing numbers of Swedes and Norwegians in the area Lutheran churches began to appear, a Swedish Lutheran church on Pleasant Ridge, Norwegian Lutheran churches at Edison, at Fir, and at Conway, the last two joining forces in 1917 to build the fine new church at Fir.

Edison Norwegian Lutheran Church dedication in 1906.  
*Skagit County Historical Museum*







Clear Lake Congregational church, built in 1910, later Community Covenant. Notice the dirt road.

*From Effie Calkins*

Episcopal mission churches appeared early, St. Mark's in Burlington and St. Paul's in Mount Vernon in 1891. Christ Episcopal church in Anacortes met in 1890 in a store room in the post office building and erected a church in 1891 at the height of the boom. Clear Lake, Hamilton, and McMurray had Episcopal churches in 1893, called Good Samaritan, St. Andrew's, and St. Luke's respectively, and All Saints in LaConner opened in 1894.

Churches of many other denominations appeared after 1900 as the population of the county became more diversified. In some areas religious needs were met by interdenominational churches such as the one at Summit Park and that at Big Lake. At the latter place the founder, Reverend Barringer, worked for the Day Lumber Company during the week as engineer on a logging locomotive and on Sundays conducted services in the community hall furnished by the Day Lumber Com-

Pulpit of the new Big Lake church in 1917. Arthur Tripp of Avon built the pulpit and carried it on his back along the dike to Mount Vernon and over the road to Big Lake in order to save money for the church.

*Picture from Josephine Barringer Hoffman*



Sunday School class of the Burlington Methodist Church in 1902. The Methodist Church can be seen in the background among the stumps. Sitting, l to r: Elizabeth Leatherwood, Nellie Hurley, Edith Whitney, Roxie Angevine. Standing, l to r: Hattie Slater, Winnie Childs, Nettie Shannon, Mary Umbarger, Bess Thomas, Irene Whitney, Mrs. Chris Antenen.

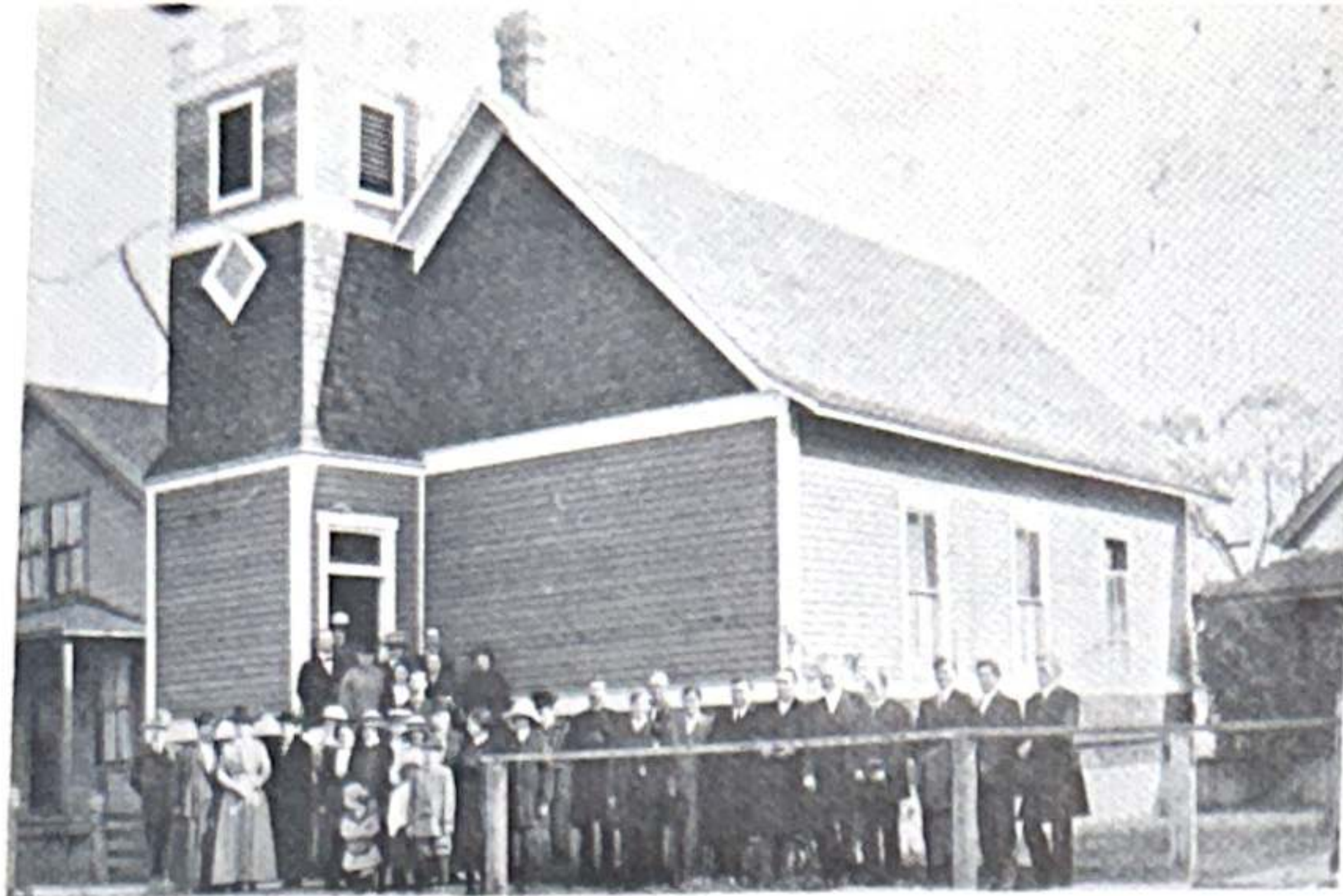
*Picture from Jessie Whitney Pulver*



New Big Lake church, built in 1917. It had begun as a home mission church in 1904, meeting for church and Sunday School in the community hall of the Day Lumber Company. In the beginning it had a tenuous connection with the Free Methodists but was never affiliated with it. Reverend Barringer was the pastor, but he is not the man in the picture. In the photograph of the interior note the pulpit made by Arthur Tripp of Avon.

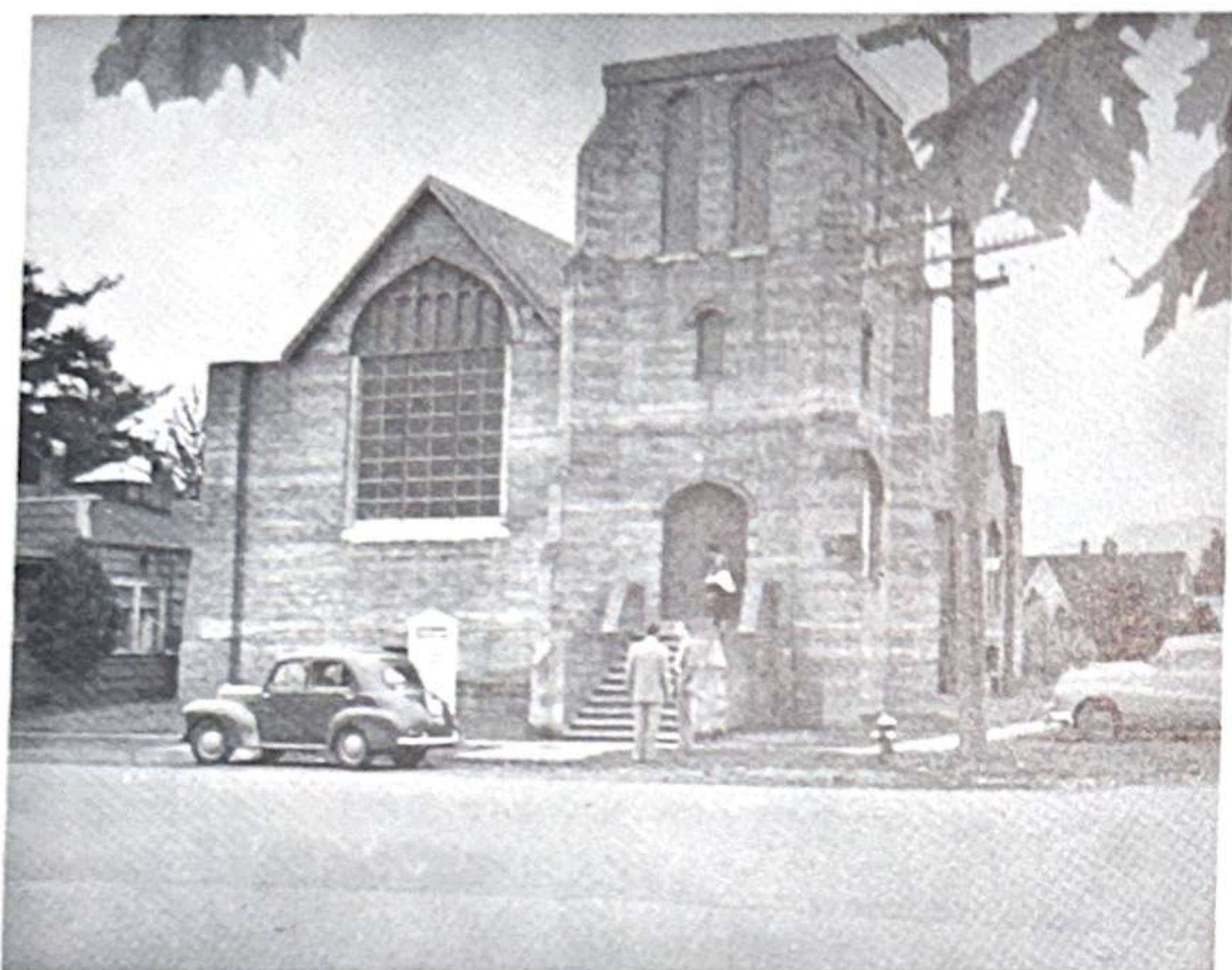
*Picture from Josephine Barringer Hoffman*





Free Methodist church in Mount Vernon, Reverend W. W. Dexter, pastor. (Standing just outside doorway at left.) Built about 1910. Before that time the church was on the road to Burlington just across the river from Riverside, reached by ferry for those coming from Mount Vernon.

*Picture from Mr. and Mrs. Lee Lindamood*



St. James Episcopal Church in Sedro Woolley, built in 1907 when Father Buzzelle was vicar. The Episcopal hospital, St. Elizabeth's, had been built about 1889 and the first chapel, served by Reverend Barnes of Anacortes, was in the hospital.

*Picture from Mrs. Robert Parker*



The Ridgeway Baptist church was built in 1889 and used until 1915. It was situated on the north side of the McLean Road about 500 feet east of its intersection with Bradshaw Road. Laurie Wells' mother taught the Sunday School for many years. Among the Sunday School pupils were Elvira Anderson, Ruthford Anderson, Mildred Elde Brandstrom, Arthur W. Gallacher, and Laurie Wells.

*Picture from Steve Elde*

pany. In 1917 the congregation was able to finance a church building. Reverend Barringer's co-workers in the woods knew him as the "sky pilot."

There were many other churches which have not been mentioned above; a complete roster would be impossible. Sometimes Sunday Schools appeared before churches; there was practically always a Sunday School connected with the church, sometimes age-graded and sometimes including all generations. Ladies Aid Societies, young people's groups, church choirs, and a great variety of church affairs fostered a lively social life, more evident in some denominations than in others. One young girl in Mount Vernon created a storm in her Catholic family when she innocently asked her father if she could join a Baptist young people's group in which her friends seemed to be having so much fun.

Churches generally limited themselves to cultivating their own vineyards and seldom took stands on social or community affairs. All were against sin, but since church doctrine differed on what was sinful and even the members of one congregation held widely varied opinions, there were few issues on which they could join forces. The major exception to the rule was Reverend A. W. Wilson of Mount Vernon. When he came in 1909 he was supposed to liquidate the faltering Presbyterian church body but by 1911 he had so revitalized it that he was made permanent pastor. In the following years, among other community activities, he pioneered work with juvenile delinquents; during his long career he never hesitated to take stands and work actively on local affairs. The role of other pastors in other communities extended beyond



Rockport Sunday School around 1920. Front row, first on left in second row, and one in third row unidentified. Others in second row: Edwards girl, Violet Grimm, Lilly Grimm, Myra Benton, Roy Wainwright. Third row: Mrs. Harry Wainwright, Midge Wainwright, Mrs. Snelling (teacher), Harry Wainwright.

*Picture from Tom Benton*



their own flocks, but in general churches were not organized to cooperate with each other.

As transportation improved and as the children of immigrant parents grew into positions of leadership the small rural churches tended to merge with those in towns and the foreign language services were abandoned. New church groups, just getting established, bought the old church buildings when combined congregations built new homes, a process which has continued to this day.

No figures are available to show what proportion of the people in the county attended church at any period. Certainly at all times there were many non-members, either because they lived too far away from any church, or because they were not interested in what the available churches offered. However, there is little question that religion was a pervasive influence, though sometimes a divisive one, especially as between Catholics and Protestants.



The Ladies Aid Society of the Skagit City Churches in 1912. The children and the people on the porch are not identified. The group, l to r: Mrs. Lena Moores, Mrs. Noste, unidentified, unidentified, Mrs. Orvid Olson, Mrs. Gidlund, unidentified, unidentified, Pearl Enquist, ..... Edler, Mrs. Lundeen, Pastor Lundeen, Mrs. Otto Larson, Mrs. Belund, Otto Larson, Mrs. Bodin, Mrs. Berglund.  
From Ronald Holttum collection

Sunday School in the 1890s at the Robert Sharpe home near Rosario. This house later burned down. Front row (mostly seated): A. V. Ginnett, James B. Wright, Matilda Carr, Wallace Sharpe, Clifford Sharpe, Grace Ginnett. Second row: Robert Sharpe, Mrs. Belle Taylor and Jimmie, Mrs. Haroldson, Frankie Dobbs, Mrs. Robert Sharpe, unidentified, Julia Haroldson, unidentified, Mrs. Sadie Torpey, Mrs. Alice Christianson. Back row, on porch: O. E. Bresee. Others unidentified.  
Picture from Wallace Sharpe collection



Cedardale Sunday School in 1912, located 2-1/2 miles south of Mount Vernon on Stackpole Road. People in picture, front row: The first six are unidentified, Teckla Sunnell (later Mrs. Nelson), Agnes Sunnell. Second row: Helmstrom boy, Johnson boy, Johnson boy, Sundquist, E. Lillquist, Erickson, Ellen Erickson (later Mrs. Williams). Third row: Alma Helmstrom, Hulda Lillquist, V. Helmstrom, unidentified, Sunnell boy, Bertha Sunnell, Myrtle Sjogren Gross, Emma Lillquist Flagg, Josephine Erickson (later Mrs. Willard), Johanna Sunnell, Mrs. Erickson Danielson. Back row: Victor Lillquist, Edward Sunnell, Henry Sunnell, Mr. Holmquist, Mrs. Lillquist, unidentified, Mrs. Matt Holmstrom.

Picture from Ronald Holttum collection



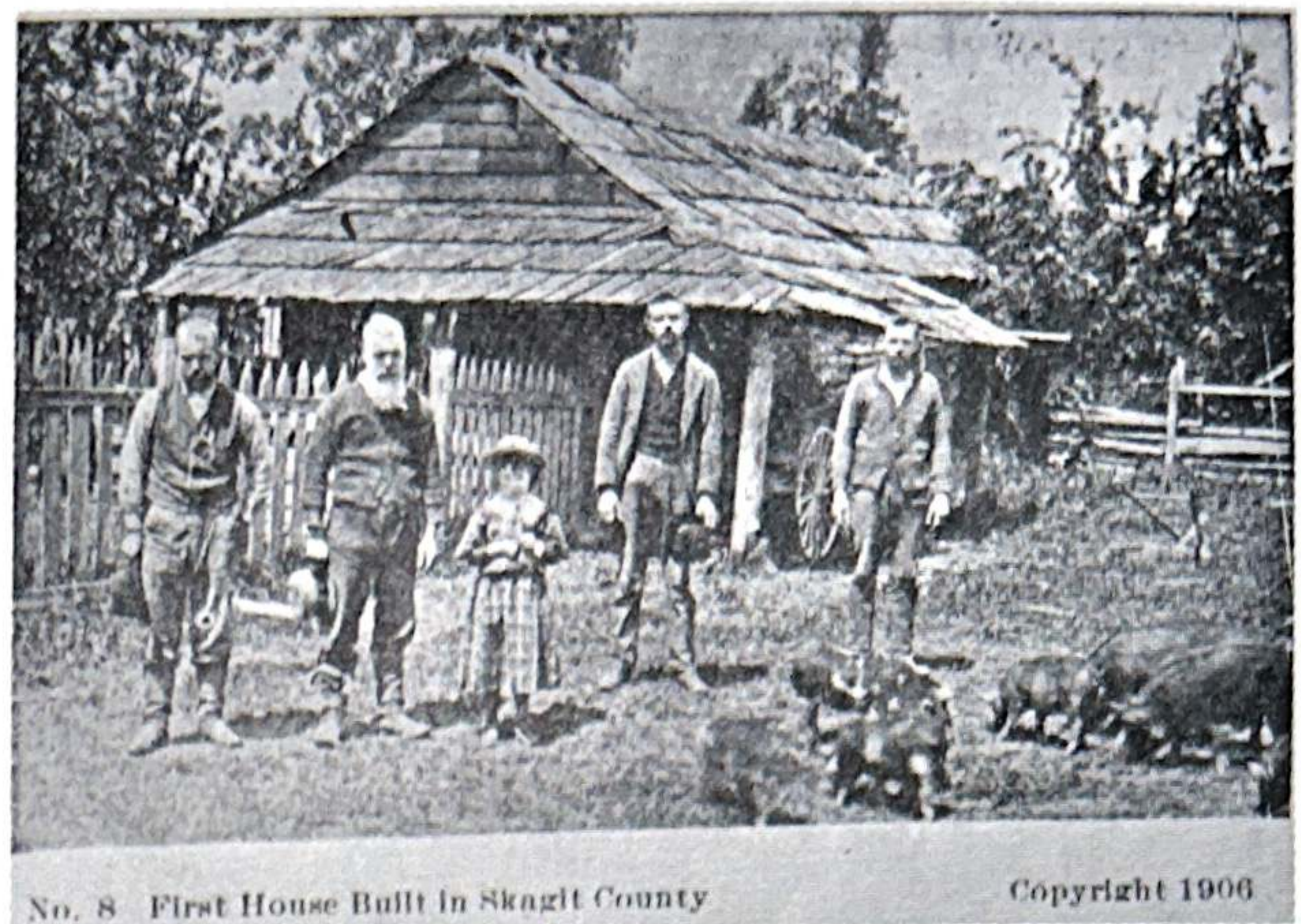
## FASHIONS AND FORMALITIES

Fashions went through some changes between 1890 and 1920 though at a slower pace than today and there were some things which remained the same during the whole 30 years. Every piece of woven or knitted material was made from the natural fibers, wool, cotton, linen, silk, or some combination of them; synthetics had not yet come out of the chemistry laboratories. Before 1900 such combinations as linsey-woolsey (a warp of either linen or cotton with a woof of wool) and bombazine (silk and wool) were often used, but they went out of fashion in favor of a wide variety of weaves of natural fibers from coarse to very fine and in a variety of textures. For girls and women the commonest everyday cottons were calicos and gingham but there was an enormous range of other fabrics from unbleached muslin to voiles and dimities. Wools offered an even greater variety of weaves.

Another constant which was just beginning to decline by 1920 was the "use-up-wear-out" syndrome. As a whole the period was one of hand-me-downs in many forms. A man would have a good suit, his Sunday suit, for years; the coat, vest, and pants matched and he always wore it with a white shirt and starched collar and cuffs. When it was finally replaced with a new one, it became the second-best suit which he wore when he went to town in the buggy to make purchases or go to the bank. Then there were the really old suits whose pants were baggy and whose coats might have patched elbows or might have been discarded entirely in favor of just the vest which might or might not match; these were the work clothes, worn in the fields or going to town in the wagon. The Sears and Roebuck catalog for 1908 offers 47 pages of made-to-measure and ready-made suits, vests, coats, and overcoats for men and boys and only two pages of overalls, jeans, carpenter's aprons, and other kinds of work clothes. Working men obviously did not buy many new clothes to work in. Pictures of men at the time bear this out.

Similarly most women had one or two "best dresses" which were demoted progressively to everyday wear and then to dirty-work wear unless they were made over for a daughter. Women and girls protected their dresses with aprons when doing housework or attending school so their garments seldom reached the disreputable state of men's working clothes. One woman, remembering her childhood, wrote:

Grandma's garments made little impression on me as a child — except for her apron. Its uses were unlimited.



No. 8 First House Built in Skagit County

Copyright 1906

Ralph C. Hartson who copyrighted this picture was at the time editor of the Mount Vernon paper, The Skagit News-Herald, and had been born in Mount Vernon of pioneer parents. He should have known what was "the first house built in Skagit County," but it is not otherwise identified and no other pictures of it have been found. The picture is of interest because the costumes of the men show clearly how old "good clothes" became rough work clothes in their final stages.

*Picture from Margaret Benedict Southwick*

The apron made a "basket" when she gathered eggs. If there were fluffy chickens to be carried to the back porch during a sudden cold spell, they made the trip peeping contentedly in Grandma's apron. When these same chicks grew to hen-hood and pecked and scratched in Grandma's flowers, she merely flapped her apron at them and they ran squawking to the chicken yard. And I can see her yet tossing cracked corn to the hungry flock from her apron.

Lots of chips and kindling were needed to start fires in the big cook-stove in Grandma's kitchen. Yes, she carried them in her apron. Lettuce, radishes, peas, string beans, carrots, apples, and peaches all found their way to the kitchen via Grandma's carry-all.

When she cooked, the apron was a handy holder for removing hot pans from the stove. To men working in the field the apron waved aloft was the signal to "come to dinner." At threshing time Grandma hovered about the long table passing aromatic dishes and flipping the big apron at pesky flies.

When children came to visit the apron was ready to dry childish tears. If the little ones were shy it made a good hiding place in case a stranger appeared unexpectedly.

The apron was used countless times to stroke a perspiring brow as Grandma bent over the hot wood stove or hoed the garden under a blistering sun. In chilly weather Grandma wrapped the friendly apron around her arms when she hurried on an outside errand or lingered at the door with a departing guest.

Hastily and a bit slyly, the apron dusted tables and chairs when company was seen com-



ing down the lane. And in the evening when the day's work was done, Grandma shed her garment of many uses and draped it over the canary's cage.

With only minor variations women's dresses were long during the whole thirty years, and little girls felt a terrific urge to lengthen their skirts as soon as they were permitted to do so after age 12 in order to feel grown up. Hem lines rose a little during the First World War but only to mid-calf. The first really short skirts belong to the flapper era of the twenties.

Another constant, with minor variations, until 1915 was the wearing of long black cotton stockings by boys, girls, and women. Sears' 1897 catalog, along with the standard cotton and wool socks and stockings, advertised silk socks for men and silk stockings for women but both were dropped in the 1908 catalog. When all the shoes were high buttoned or laced and skirts were long, stockings were practically underwear. It caused the tongues of Mount Vernon gossips to wag when N. J. Moldstad gave his girl friend two pairs of silk stockings. Oxfords for women after 1900 made stockings a little more visible and no longer unmentionable. When women and girls began to buy silk hose they often purchased the economical ones that were cotton to a point below the knee and silk only where it might be expected to show.



Alice, Harry, and Minnie Burdon of Anacortes before 1890. Note Harry's woollen stockings and his shoes.  
*From Jean Forrest*

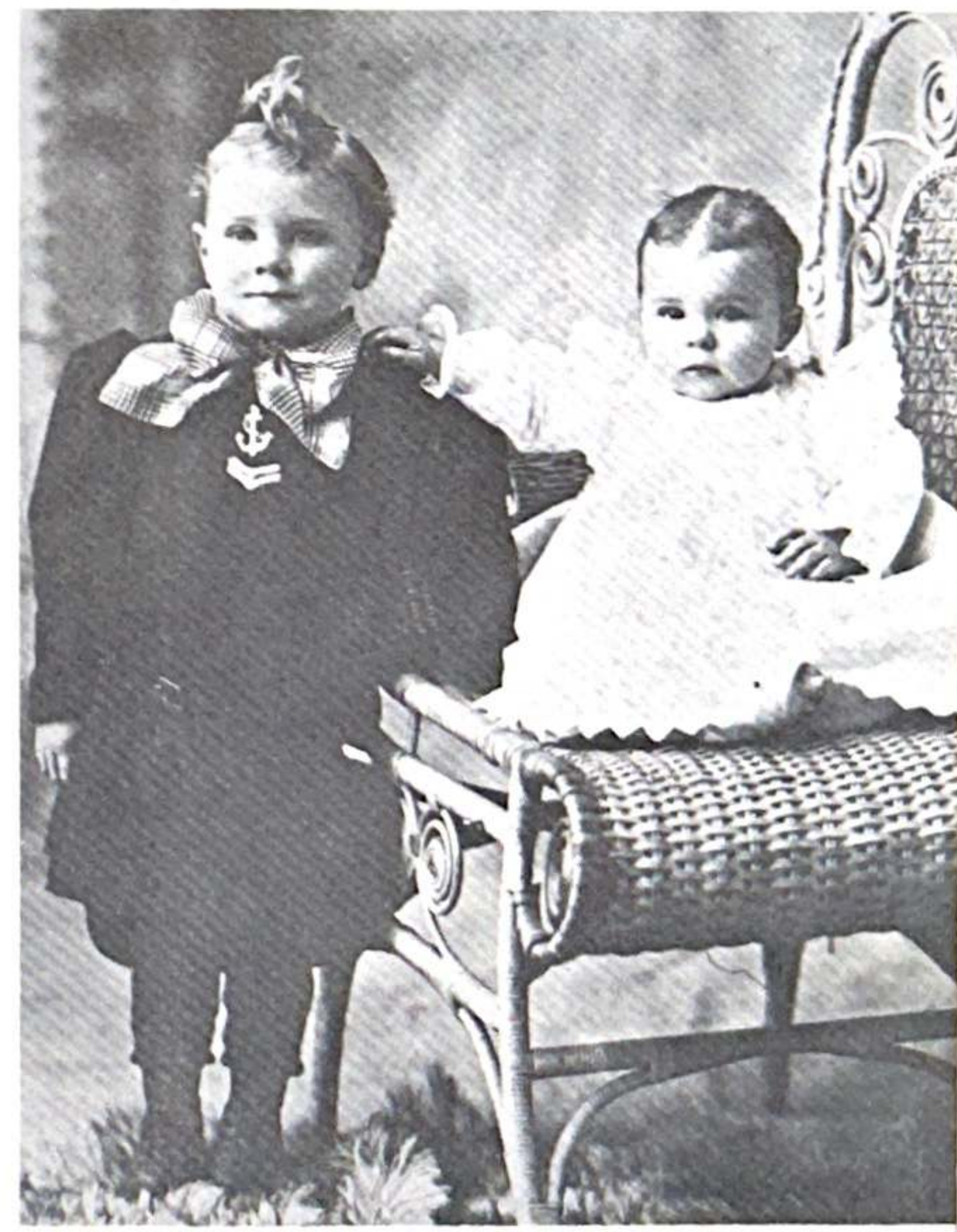
Richmond Valentine and Lilly Schroeder in 1907.  
*Skagit County Historical Museum*



Phil Summers in 1915. Note the long black stockings.  
*From Phil Summers*



Grant Ball and his sister, Ruth Dunlap (adopted by Hattie B. Dunlap) about 1908.  
*From Albert Ovenell*







Anacortes group about 1895, only half identified. 3rd and 4th in front row are W. V. Wells and Nellie Dodson Stevenson. 3rd and 4th in second row are Harvey Rickaby and Minnie Burdon, M.D. The first three in back row are Lance Burdon, Alice Burdon Soule, and Effie Burdon Gillespie.

*Picture from Jean Forrest*



Della Thompson about 1903. A studio photograph in the elegant styles of the day.

*Skagit County Historical Museum*



Sadie Siverling of Marblemount in the early 1900s. She ran the boarding house and saloon and was perhaps the best known person in the little new community.

*Picture from Hazel Tracy (daughter of Sadie's sister, Maggie)*



Main Street in early 1900s. Anacortes, near 8th and Commercial.

*From the collection of Wallie Funk*



The basic undergarment up to 1910, and for many persons long after that, was the union suit, "long johns" of cotton in summer and wool in winter, worn by men and women, girls and boys. Cotton union suits sometimes stopped at the knee but often reached to the ankles. As heating in homes, schools, and places of business improved the winter woollen union suits became less necessary but teachers believed for a long time that some children from poorly heated homes wore the same long johns night and day all winter.

Styles for women before and for a few years after 1900 glorified the tiny waist, the "wasp" waist; the corsets of the period were built to enable women to lace themselves into hour-glass shape. A few local young women achieved the stylish look but most women in this region worked too hard to bother with tight lacing. However, they all wore corsets with steel stays over their union suits. Over that went a corset cover (the fancier ones were called camisoles) and one or more full petticoats. When narrow skirts became high style, the "hobble skirts" of about 1913, the petticoats necessarily became narrow too. Shirtwaists with separate skirts were very popular for a long time.

Hats were essential for both men and women whenever they went out of doors. Men's hats went through the same down-grading process as their suits, but a man without a hat or at least a cap was unthinkable. (Look back over the pictures in this book and see how many hatless men you can find.) Women's hats were sometimes made over with new trimmings, either at home or at the millinery shop, but a new hat for Easter was the hope of every girl.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Burdon of March's Point with their first grandchild, Harry Gillespie, about 1904.

*Picture from Jean Forrest*



On a beach near Anacortes about 1915. The bathing costumes were typical of the period from about 1905 when women first began to appear in bathing suits to about 1920 when "Annette Kellermans" began to be worn and bare legs became respectable. The young people are, l to r: Wallie Funk (Sr.), Catherine Matheson (later Mrs. Warren Gilbert, Sr.), an unidentified girl, and Harry Single.

*Picture from Wallie Funk*

A crew of women section hands with their male boss on the Northern Pacific Railway during the First World War in 1917 or 1918. Notice the work costumes. The two women at the right are wearing bloomers below the knees; three others and the man are in loose-fitting bib overalls. The picture shows only the head and shoulders of the sixth woman.

*Picture from the collection of Fred Bandazy*







C. C. Finley and Marvin King while working for the water department of Mount Vernon in 1905. The water supply at that time came from springs at the foot of Lincoln Hill. Finley later became a dentist in Burlington. Note the starched collars.

*Picture from Lucile Elkins Finley*

Alice Burdon of Anacortes in the 1890s. Notice the black cotton stockings and the button shoes.

*Picture from Jean Forrest*



Men's good shirts all had detachable collars and cuffs. The shirt was not washed every time it was worn but the freshly starched collar made it seem fresh. The first synthetic to appear in clothing was the celluloid collar which had some slight resemblance to a starched collar and yet could be scrubbed clean in the wash basin. It was never accepted in polite society but it solved a problem for some. Apparently work shirts came in colors and had their collars attached.

Before little girls graduated to long skirts and proper deportment many of them were tomboys, climbing trees and playing rough and tumble games. They were taught from early childhood to be modest, however, so they wore black sateen bloomers under their skirts and over their panties. They were not properly dressed unless they had ribbons on their braids. Styles in hair ribbons varied. At one period adolescent girls vied with each other to see who could wear the greatest number of yards of three-inch black ribbon, fastened to her hair with a comb.

Make-up was little used and mostly in secret. Beauty parlors were unknown. The length of a girl's hair and the thickness of her braids were matters of pride; bobbed hair did not appear until the twenties. When girls played basketball or other active sports they wore very full bloomers, gathered below the knees. Girls went swimming in bathing suits with sleeves, trunks and skirts to the knees, and long black stockings covering the legs.

Tobacco was used only by men until the very end of the period. Cigarette smoking did not really begin until the First World War and only a few very daring women smoked in 1920. Men occasionally dipped snuff, but they usually smoked pipes or cigars or chewed plug tobacco. Chewing required frequent spitting so every public place was equipped with spittoons. Boys and men practiced accurate spitting, with the usual number of misses while they were learning, and took pride in the distance from which they could hit the cuspidor. On the street anything or nothing could be the target. When the campaign against pulmonary tuberculosis got under way after 1912, signs were placed on the outside walls of buildings, "Please do not spit. To do so may spread disease."

Most people were too busy for the formalities of "Society," though a few of the customs from the more leisured East were observed. Many ladies had engraved calling cards and a few observed an afternoon "at home" when friends might call and have a cup of tea. Morning visiting was unknown ex-



cept as an occasional chat across the back fence. Women were organizing clubs around 1900 and after, some for fun, some for self-improvement, and some for civic purposes. A few of these still survive, the Billiken Club of LaConner of which Hazel Lockhart was the first president, and Coterie and History Club of Mount Vernon, for example.

Most social life was very informal. Recreation was usually a family affair. One or several families might get together for a picnic or to go clam digging or berry picking. Churches and other organizations held picnics, lodges and granges held meetings and dances, boat excursions drew all age groups, as did Fourth of July celebrations, particularly those of Anacortes and Sedro Woolley. While cars were being used extensively before 1920 they were family cars and very few young people owned their own until well into the 1920s. Birthdays, marriages, holidays all brought families together and so did deaths.

In case of death before the 1890s the women laid out the corpse, a carpenter constructed the coffin, and the nearest minister conducted the service. Burial was often on the home farm. About 1890 the I.O.O.F. established cemeteries in Mount Vernon, Edison, and elsewhere, though the Pleasant Ridge cemetery is probably the oldest white burying ground in the county. After a funeral the friends and relatives gathered at the home; neighbors had brought food and people ate, condoled with the family of the departed, visited with friends and relatives whom they seldom had a chance to see, and in spite of the sadness of the occasion found it a welcome break in the pattern of their lives. After 1900, hearses, funeral directors, and factory-made coffins began to take the place of the wakes and the gathering of friends at the home, but home funerals continued to be preferred by many families for a long time.

Before World War I the people of Skagit

Susie Peck and Mrs. Bailey in LaConner in 1899. This is probably a music lesson.

*Skagit County  
Historical Museum*



Funeral procession in LaConner near convergence of Maple and Morris Streets. Undated but probably around 1905.

*Photograph by  
Frank E. Anderson*





County were not really provincial — they or their parents had all come from somewhere else and had brought with them knowledge, attitudes, values, and memories. These were submerged after they reached Skagit County and became absorbed in personal and local concerns: earning a living, beautifying the homes and towns, campaigning against tuberculosis, establishing libraries, starting parks, securing adequate schools, working for women's suffrage, fighting against demon rum, organizing a county fair, improving dairy stock, and a thousand and one other projects.

After the war began in Europe in 1914 public opinion gradually hardened against the Germans and by the time the United States declared war in 1917 everything German was hated. People boycotted German products and some actually smashed their china dishes because they had been made in Germany. The language was dropped from high school curriculums. The Anton Bergs who had always been proud of being German suddenly decided that they came from Belgium. (Actually they were from Luxembourg but that was too difficult to explain.) Propaganda to save food for the starving Belgians and Armenians brought the war to the family dining room table. People grew Victory Gardens, bought war bonds or purchased war saving stamps at 25 cents each till there were enough to convert into a bond. Girls and women knitted socks for the American soldiers and rolled bandages for the Red Cross. The men who could not go to war organized themselves to help on the home front. Young men volunteered for the armed forces in large numbers, but to equalize the burden Congress passed the first conscription act

since the Civil War with almost no opposition in the Congress or from the public. The country embarked with complete concentration on the crusade to "make the world safe for democracy."

Army camps were hastily constructed and officers trained with all possible speed. The conscripts were rapidly transformed into soldiers and transported in convoys of troopships through the prowling packs of German submarines without any loss of life. By June of 1918 the first American troops were in battle as the German armies made their last unsuccessful push toward Paris. Five months later combat ended with the Armistice of November 11, 1918. Casualties had been heavy among those soldiers engaged in battle but most of the Americans were still in training behind the lines when the war ended so total American losses were light. People quickly settled back from their war-time emotional fervor, secure in the faith that if you fought and won a war to make the world safe for democracy, then certainly democracy was safe and you could turn your attention back to your own problems. Some disillusionment resulted from the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 but most people's attention was elsewhere.

The armistice was soon followed by the termination of war contracts. Anacortes suffered as the Sloan shipyard closed and huge Army orders for canned salmon were cancelled. Agricultural prices dropped sharply and many farmers found themselves in financial difficulties. The future looked less certain and predictable than it had in an earlier age. Still 1920 found Skagit County with its basic wealth intact and its people still holding their faith in education, hard work, and progress.



In 1911 the special train of President William Howard Taft visited Mount Vernon and he spoke from a platform erected at the north end of the railway station. An enormous crowd had gathered to hear him.  
From collection of the Skagit County Historical Museum



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# BUTLER LUMBER COMPANY CREW-1916



Crew of the Butler Lumber Company about 1916. Front row, l to r: 1, ..... Wallace; 2, Avery Jones; 3, unidentified; 4, Sam Henderson; 5, unidentified; 6, unidentified; 7, John Lloyd; 8, Fred Butler; 9, Ed Bulson; 10, unidentified; 11, "Two Saw" Jackson; 12, Herman Butler; 13, Maurice Butler (on Herman's lap); 14, Stan Butler; 15, unidentified; 16, Ira Allen; 17, John Ruthford; 18, ..... Dodge; 19, Bill Barr; 20, Fleet Marlow; 21, Jim Davenport; 22, Ed Jonasson; 23, Joe Dawson; 24, unidentified small child. Second row,

l to r: 1, Reese Shope; 2, Walt Heglin; 3, unidentified; 4, unidentified; 5, unidentified; 6, Verne Kirkby; 7, Claude Miller; 8, unidentified; 9, Nick Hemphill; 10, unidentified; 11, Carl Davenport; 12, Art Osborne; 13, Orla Wyman; 14, F. Teachman; 15, Clyde Wyman; 16, Herb Dodge; 17, Tom Davenport; 18, John Parker; 19, unidentified; 20, Jess Wampler. On horse: 1, unidentified; 2, Harold Dodge.  
From Fred Butler

Property of Eddon V. Verrall